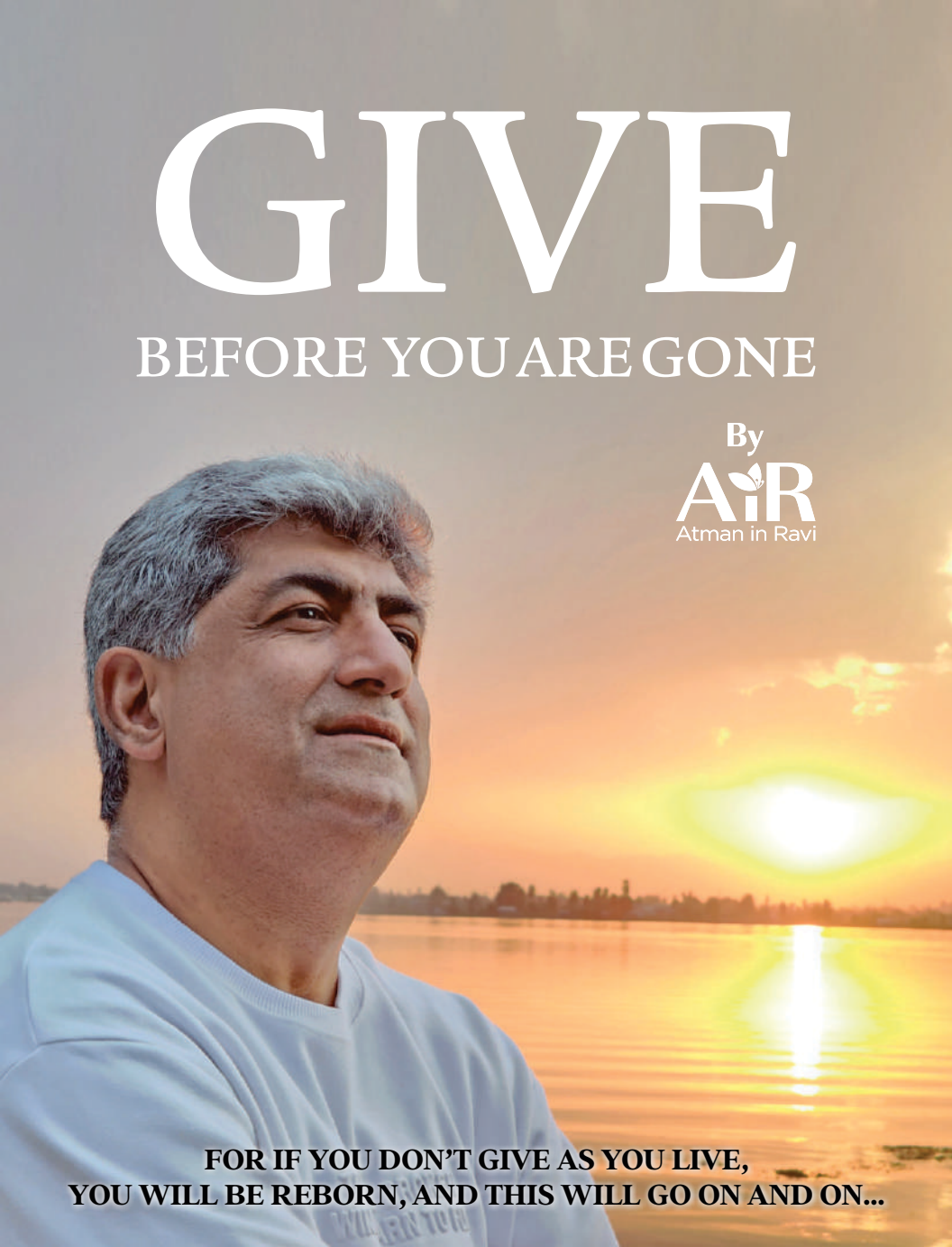
GIVE

BEFORE YOU ARE GONE

By

AiR

Atman in Ravi



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YOU WILL BE REBORN, AND THIS WILL GO ON AND ON...

SHOUT
SHARE
IT

GIVE

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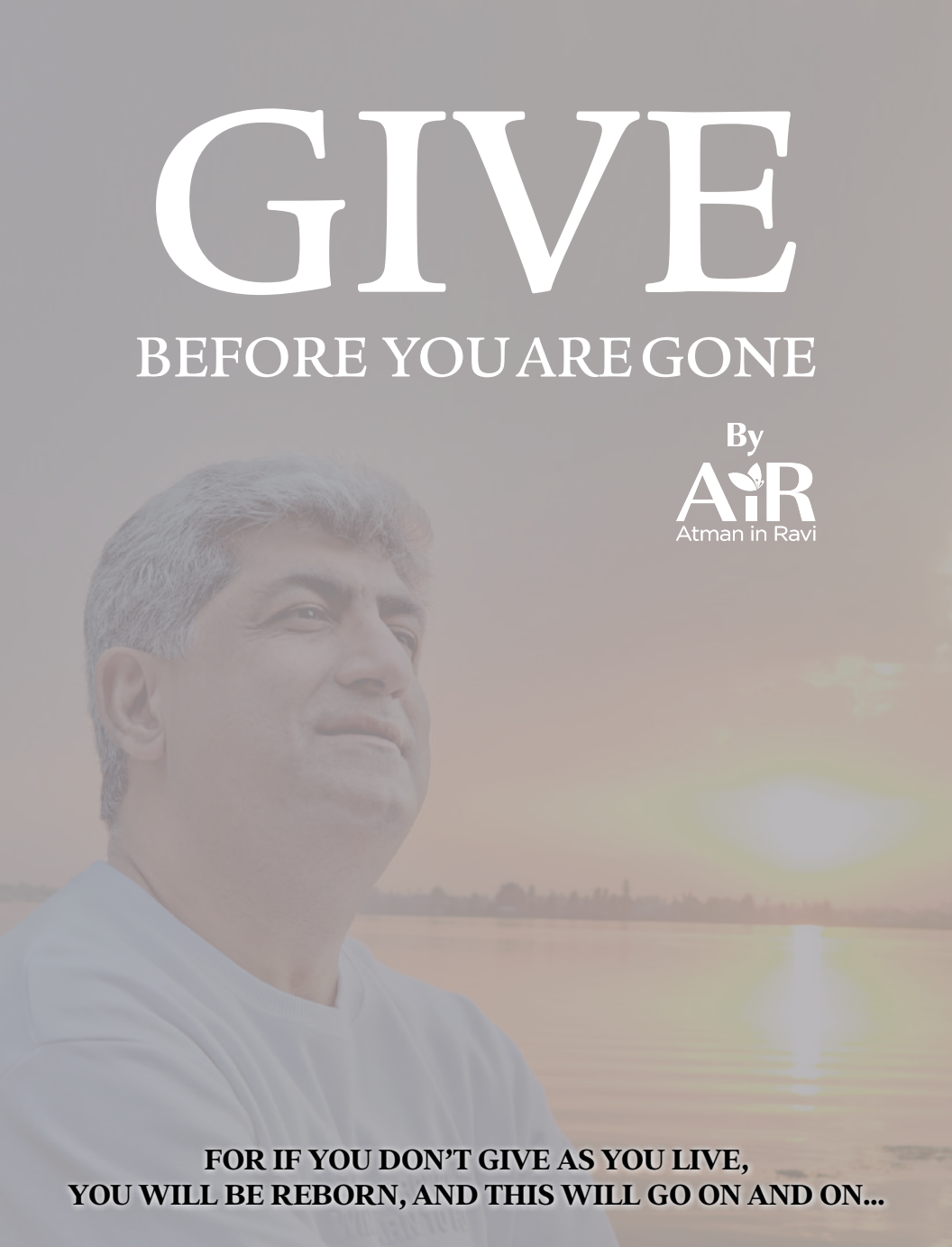

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ISBN: 978-93-5627-681-9

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Printed by: Vel Murugan Binding Works

Publisher: AiR - *Atman* in Ravi (Ravi V. Melwani)

Kemp Fort Mall, No-97, Old Airport Road, Bangalore-560017.

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PREFACE

Isn't it funny that we spend our entire life collecting money, only to ultimately leave it all behind?

Why should we Give before we are Gone? As I wrote over 50 books on several subjects including Life and Happiness, on Enlightenment and Peace, and on Liberation from all suffering on earth, I realized that a simple sign that differentiated the ones who have realized the truth from the ones who are ignorant, is the former's ability to give. Many people possess little, but still, they give. Others have far more than what they need, but they continue to live with greed and don't give as they live. If one has realized the truth about life, then one knows beyond a doubt that nothing is his.

Everything belongs to the Divine.
I came with nothing and when I go, I cannot take anything.
So why not give as I live!

Those who realize the truth about life, give as they live because they know that if they don't, in the end, others will

burn what they earn. They know that if they do not give, everything will be snatched away anyway. They realize that life is not about accumulating wealth. We must spend before our end, so the world will cry when we die.

When I look around, I see the rich and famous adding zeros to their wealth. It seems that they are becoming richer, but in reality, every time they add a zero, they become a zero in the spiritual world! They may be collecting money in the material world, but it is their ignorance that does not make them realize that nothing in the material world will belong to them. Their wealth makes them lose their health, as they live with stress, worry and anxiety. Ultimately, because they do not realize the truth, they have a lot of money in their bank, but there is emptiness in their spiritual tank.

The one who realizes the truth, gives and keeps on giving. He realizes that he is not this body, mind and ego. He is the Divine Soul! He realizes that this world is nothing but *Leela*, a Divine Drama and we are mere actors who come on this earth stage, play our part and finally depart. Everything is *Maya*, a Cosmic Illusion. There is only one reality – the Divine. We are all manifestations of that One Supreme Immortal Power - SIP. If we are enveloped in ignorance, we will not give as we live. We will just die. Everything that we thought as 'Mine,' will be taken away after we are made into a shrine.

Giving is a mark of Enlightenment. The ones who give, have realized the truth about life. The ones who don't, not only create bad *Karma* and suffer, but return to this earth in a

rebirth, only to suffer again and again. This book, *Give before you are Gone*, will make you open your real eyes to realize the truth about life. It will make you understand that you are nothing, just as nothing belongs to you. It will make you give as you live. It will make you forgive, as you live with bliss, peace and happiness.

It is not easy to Give before we are Gone. Our rascal mind will make us feel insecure. But those who live with faith, hope and trust, transcend the mind, just as they overcome their ignorance. Giving reveals how enlightened a person is and this book will inspire you to give as you live.

If you don't Give before you are Gone,
You are sure to suffer when you are reborn.

INTRODUCTION

Did you bring anything that you will take with you?
Nothing is yours! Isn't this absolutely true?

Wake up! Realize the truth! Before the bell rings, and it's time to go, realize who you are and why you are here. Don't you hear every now and then that somebody unexpectedly died? Just as I was writing this book, I heard about the famous Australian cricketer Shane Warne who passed away at 52. Many people, young and old, leave the planet reminding us of the reality of death. Nobody can escape from it! Everybody must die. But before we die, we must find out – 'Who am I and why am I here?' and 'Why must I give as I live?'

Everybody wants to be happy, but not everybody knows that the simplest way to be happy is to make others happy. Joy shared is joy doubled, just as sorrow shared is sorrow halved. Haven't you experienced bliss when you give? If we don't give as we live, whatever we think is mine, will be left behind. Ultimately, nothing will belong to us.

With this simple truth staring at our face that we all must go, and nobody can escape this truth in this 'earth show', and none of us can take even a penny with us, we must learn to Give before we are Gone. This book will not only inspire you to give but will make you realize why we must give. It will lead you from Self-Realization to God-Realization. Whether you open your real eyes, realize the truth and get enlightened, or you just understand the importance of giving, but continue living with insecurity, that is your choice! Either you will learn to give because you want to do good *Karma*, enjoy the fruits of good action and even plant good deeds that will become the seeds of destiny or you will realize that nothing belongs to you and your giving is a mark of your Enlightenment. The act of giving away everything, all material possessions before Death, signifies that one is a liberated Soul. In this case, one will not return to earth in a rebirth, but will be liberated from the cycle of death and rebirth in *Samsara* and be united with the Divine.

Who is a truly rich man? It is not the one who dies rich, but the one who gives before he goes, standing on his toes, not dead in the bed, for this shows that he has realized the truth about life. He realizes I am not 'I'. Nothing is mine. Everything is given to me as a trust that I must pass on to others. We come with nothing and ultimately when we go, we cannot take anything with us. How many of us realize this simple truth?

This book will inspire people to create good *Karma*, to do good deeds that will become seeds and will bear fruit of a good life that unfolds day after day. A few fortunate ones will go

beyond *Karma* and become a *Karma Yogi*. They will evolve from *Karma* to *Moksha* and achieve the ultimate goal of life. They will realize that God is not God, God is SIP, a Supreme Immortal Power. God is in you. God is in me. They are the ones who will give, without the ego feeling, '*I* am giving.' They will accept the Divine Will as life unfolds every morning, and surrender to whatever will be. This is only possible for those who go on a quest, overcome ignorance and realize the truth.

Giving is not an option. We have to give. But we have a choice. Either we can give as we live, or we will be forced to give when at that moment of death, everything will be snatched away from us.

Those who are wise, realize and they Give before they are Gone.
The others, they live with ignorance,
and they are reborn, and this goes on and on.

01

THE JOY OF GIVING

There is joy in giving,
But not everybody has this art.
Those who learn to give as they live,
Are the ones who are truly smart.

There is great joy in giving. When have you last experienced the bliss that comes when you give, and you make somebody smile? Throughout my life, I was blessed to give, and I found that there was far more joy in giving and making a difference, than in just making money. *Happiness lies not in earning, but rather in spending what we earn, in giving and not just getting.* Unfortunately, most people are doing the reverse. They spend their entire life collecting treasures, money, wealth and assets, which they will ultimately leave behind. They never learn the art of giving. They never experience the bliss that comes in making somebody smile.

What is the easiest and the best way to be happy? Make others happy! The moment you make somebody else happy, you are sure to put a smile on your face. Just try it. Stop for a moment and try to give somebody something. It may be just a small chocolate or even a smile or just a compliment of a few good words. Just give and you will experience bliss in that moment that you live. Those who never experience this bliss, live and die, with a lot of wealth, but in reality, they are no better than the poorest of the poor.

When we give something to somebody, it is only natural to light a spark of joy in them and happiness is contagious. It spreads like ripples in a lake. When you try to share your blessings with others, you experience a Divine ecstasy that is beyond comprehension. Haven't you experienced this bliss?

Man, unfortunately, is selfish. Man doesn't want to give. In fact, he wants to snatch, he wants to take away what belongs

to others. That is why, even today, in the 21st century, there are global wars. There is a conflict between man and man, families, religions and countries, because man is not willing to give. Neither is he willing to give nor is he willing to forgive. Man does not realize the meaning of life, nor does he experience the beauty in giving. Somehow, he has grown up with the belief that life is all about becoming rich, collecting money and wealth. He doesn't realize the simple truth that ultimately, nothing will belong to him. He follows the herd, the majority of people who do not give as they live. One day, he dies, and he doesn't experience the bliss in sharing, in giving, in making a difference.

What about those who give? They are the truly wealthy ones. Their life is filled with peace, love and bliss. Not only do they give, but they make giving a habit. They live with the simple Realization that nothing belongs to us. Every time they give, they experience a joy that inspires them to give again and again. They make giving a part of their living schedule, just like there is breathing and eating. The bliss and happiness that comes from giving, cannot come from doing anything else.

As long as man lives a selfish life and is self-centered, controlled by his ego, all he thinks is 'What's in it for *me*? What do *I* want? What can *I* give *my* family? This is *mine*, that is *mine*!' He loves himself and doesn't experience the joy of giving. He is a prisoner of his ego and his mind. Together he lives as the ME, the Mind and Ego, without experiencing the bliss that is in being kind and compassionate. Because he doesn't give, he never experiences the bliss of philanthropy.

He doesn't even know the meaning of being humane. His heart is made of stone.

How does he find his happiness? He believes that happiness is pleasure. He spends his entire life chasing success and achievement. He wants more and more. He doesn't stop at fulfilling his need and he lets his greed take command of his life. To him, happiness comes from money. The more powerful and wealthier he is, the happier he thinks he will be. Unfortunately, he lives and dies with this myth. He doesn't realize that money is not equal to happiness.

If money could buy happiness,
Then the rich would be glad, not sad.

When will we realize that all successful people are not happy, but all happy people are successful? What makes people happy without being successful?

The truly happy ones evolve from a life of success and achievement to a life of contentment and fulfilment. They realize the truth that nothing belongs to us. They evolve from a material life to a spiritual life. They see Divinity in one and all. They give and they continue to give as they live. Each act of giving, each experience of serving others, gives them peace, joy and bliss that inspires them beyond any achievement. There is a great satisfaction that comes from making others happy and this happiness is far more than making a worldly dream come true. As long as we have goals of earning more and more, we may amass all the wealth in the

world, but we will not even have a dime of true happiness that comes from contentment and fulfilment.

Why is man ignorant when it comes to giving? Why doesn't man realize that nothing belongs to him? Why does man collect millions, only to ultimately leave it all behind? It is because man does not learn the secret – Give, before you are Gone. Because he does not experience the bliss that comes in giving, in sharing his wealth, he creates more and more stress and anxiety chasing success, by which he ultimately loses his health. Although he wants happiness, he doesn't learn that happiness is not just pleasure. He doesn't evolve in the journey of happiness from achievement to fulfilment, and finally to the peak of Enlightenment. He lives, he dies, and he returns to earth in a rebirth. The cycle goes on and on, but he continues to live an ignorant life, without experiencing the joy of giving.

I started giving as early as when I was 8. If I was eating something and our servants and drivers were deprived of it, I would share my portion of food with them. What did I realize? There was far more happiness in sharing that piece of bread than in pushing it down my throat. This stuck in my head, as I experienced tremendous satisfaction and bliss. I grew up giving and sharing, as I experienced the joy of giving. I started working when I was 16 and I learned a secret — every time I gave, it returned to me multi-fold. It was only later that I realized that this was *Karma*, the Universal Law of Action and Reaction.

The Law of *Karma* works like a boomerang. What goes around

comes around. The more you give, the more you get. If you give somebody happiness, you can be sure that a lot more happiness will come back to you. I experienced this in every step of my life, and for the last 5 decades, I have found that there is no greater joy than the joy of giving. I used to go to the street to help the weary get back on their feet, to give them food, clothes and medicine. Every time I gave them something, there was more joy, more happiness than what I experienced in giving myself something. Making others happy is far more fulfilling than making yourself happy. I realized this very early in life and I have been giving for nearly 40 years. I live as the happiest man in the world because I give every day that I live. Every act of giving creates happiness that cannot be measured in currency notes and coins. My giving not only gave me happiness but gave me so much success and wealth that I never found myself in a situation where I did not have enough to give. I gave freely and wholeheartedly, creating joy. What did I realize? My coffers were never empty. Every time I gave, my bins got filled with far more than what I gave. Such is the magical law of *Karma*. The more you give, the more you will get. And it is not just about money and wealth, it is more to do with joy and happiness. When we make others happy, our life becomes full of happiness. When we put a smile on somebody's face, our life becomes full of smiles and laughter. I did this and was blessed with eternal happiness.

Unfortunately, most people think that life is all about making ourselves happy. Instead of giving and experiencing joy, people are living trying to make themselves happy. Not only do they miss the bliss that comes from making others happy,

but they also let their greed overtake their need and they are never satisfied. Their passion for achievement and success, wealth, name and fame creates more stress and misery in their life. It is because their focus is on getting, and not on giving. They never learned the truth that there is joy in giving. There is far more happiness in putting a smile on somebody's face than putting money in the bank. They live and they fill their tank, with all the money and wealth they can collect, only to ultimately, leave it all behind. Why is man seeking success, achievement, money and wealth? It is because he believes that all these will create happiness. He doesn't realize the simple truth that happiness is not in getting, but in giving. Nobody becomes happy earning. Joy is in spending. However, man is so busy earning, that he forgets to spend. Soon, he reaches his end. What he earns, others burn. What he collects, he leaves behind. He had a great treasure, and by giving, he could create joy greater than any pleasure. Alas, he did not give, when he did live and soon, his life was over. He did not experience the joy of giving!

Do you give? Have you experienced the joy of giving or are you one of those who believes that if you give, you will become poor? There can be no poorer beggar, no greater bankrupt than one who believes that giving will make him poor. Such a person has not learned the simple wisdom that giving can never make you poor.

Every time you plant a seed, You get a tree of a million seeds.
So does every deed of goodness,
Create happiness that is a million times greater.

Unfortunately, we don't want to plant that seed, that deed of

giving. So, we do not harvest joy, bliss and happiness. We still have time to give as long as we live. We must get this into our head, that we cannot give after we are dead. Whatever we believe is ours, will be snatched away. We can take nothing with us when we leave this world, not even a pin. Why not win then, by Giving before we are Gone. If we don't use what is ours to make others happy, we are sure to lose it. Is there any doubt that nothing will belong to us in that moment of death? When we lose our breath, in that very moment that we are gone, we give everything away. Isn't it sad, that we had a treasure that could create the greatest pleasure if only we learned to give away what we had? Because we do not give as we live, we lose the joy that comes in giving.

Start giving today. Remember, the more you give, the more will return to you. Experience the joy of giving and keep on giving as you are living. This is what life is all about. To give is to truly live. If you don't realize this simple truth, look out for an obituary of somebody who has died today, and find out what he took with him. He left everything behind! Do you want to follow such people who died, or you want to give as you live and enjoy the Divine bliss that comes with the joy of giving?

For it is in giving that we receive.

Saint Francis of Assisi

02

NOTHING IS OURS

Did you bring anything with you?
Will you take something when you go?
Nothing is ours, this is the Truth!
This world is nothing but a show.

Why is it that people don't give? Why is it that people die so rich, with millions and billions, all in a sense wasted and because they did not use it, they had to lose it! It was theirs to spend before their end. But because they did not realize that the world is just a show and we are just actors who come and go, they did not give as they did live. And whatever wealth they got, to spend they forgot!

Why must we Give before we are Gone? The reasons are many, but the biggest of them all is that nothing belongs to us. Such a simple truth, but we don't realize it. Although we see that we bring nothing with us when we come, and when we go, we take nothing, still we don't realize the simple truth – Nothing is ours! *It is said when the world conqueror, Alexander the Great was dying, he tried desperately to save his life. He was even willing to give away his entire wealth. But he could not save himself from death.* Death is certain. Nobody can escape from death. It is said that he asked that his hands be let loose outside his coffin for the world to realize that when we go, we will go empty-handed.

Haven't you seen recently, that when somebody died, not only did they leave their material possessions behind, but they also left everything – their family, their friends, even their own body behind? Ironically, we think our body is ours, but it is ours only till the moment of death. Our loved ones, near and dear ones destroy our body. They burn it or return it to dust and then we are gone forever, leaving everything behind. Isn't this the absolute truth? Then why is it so difficult to realize that nothing is ours and before we are gone, we

must give and we must do it as we live!

Somehow, we don't ponder on the truth about life and death. We do not reflect on how we are born. When the fusion of two cells causes the first sign of our existence as the zygote in our mother's womb, we have already started our life journey. But we believe in the lie that our birthday is the day that we arrive on earth. But the truth is that our birth happens 9 months before! When we ponder on this reality and how the body evolves as the embryo, as if by magic, we realize that we are not even the body. It is our body, but we are the ones who are born 9 months before. Do we bring anything with us? What causes our birth? A very few people realize that the only thing that we bring with us is our *Karma*, our past deeds. It is because of past *Karma* that we are born, and it is as per our *Karma* that life will unfold before we are ultimately gone. If we don't give what we get, and we live a life that is self-centred and selfish, without realizing that nothing belongs to us, we will not only create bad *Karma*, which leads to bad circumstances in this life and not just an unhappy destiny on earth, but also, a miserable rebirth. Realizing that we bring nothing but our *Karma*, and we take nothing but our *Karma* when we go, the wise ones give and give as much as they can, so that at least, they can carry with them the treasure of their *Karma* in a life beyond death.

What about death? While we are certain to die, are we not certain that nothing will go when the final whistle does blow? At the end of the game, if we do not spend what we earned, it will just be burned by those who will receive it as a fortune.

Both facts are certain – the fact that we will die, and the truth that if we do not spend before our end, if we do not give as we live, we will just lose everything that belonged to us because we did not use it.

Nothing is ours. This is a simple truth. But as long as we do not realize this truth, we will cling to everything that belongs to us, because of the fear that we will not have enough for ourselves. We have been taught that success is happiness. We have learned to fill our house with possessions. We even lose our health trying to create wealth. It is strange that although nothing belongs to us, we spend our entire life chasing success, achievement, money, name and fame, to collect possessions. We even cheat the world, our own near and dear ones, customers, vendors, the government, only to ultimately leave everything behind. Isn't this the highest form of ignorance? When will we stop following the herd and learn to give?

There are people in this world who have given. There are great philanthropists who did not live with ignorance. They knew that their wealth was only theirs as long as they had breath.

MARK ZUCKERBERG

Mark Zuckerberg found success at a young age by creating a website in college that later became Facebook. He and his wife have pledged to give away 99% of their wealth to charity over the course of their lifetime. By providing funding to science, justice and education initiatives, the Chan-Zuckerberg family is making a world of difference.

ANDREW CARNEGIE

Andrew Carnegie came from Scotland to the United States and started work at age thirteen. He eventually launched the steel industry in Pittsburgh. At age sixty-five, he sold the company to J. P. Morgan for $480 million and devoted the rest of his life to his philanthropic activities and writing. During his lifetime, Carnegie gave away over $350 million. He was perhaps the first to state publicly that the rich have a moral obligation to give away their fortunes. He wrote 'The Gospel of Wealth', in which he states that all personal wealth beyond what is required for the needs of one's family should be regarded as a trust fund for the benefit of the community. His philanthropic interests focused on education, world peace and the establishment of free public libraries. He built 2,509 libraries throughout the English-speaking world.

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER

John D. Rockefeller is considered to be the wealthiest man and the most prominent philanthropist in the history of United States. He made his millions through the American oil industry. Rockefeller donated more than 500 million dollars to religious, educational, and scientific causes through his Foundation. He funded the establishment of the University of Chicago and the Rockefeller Institute, among many other philanthropic endeavours.

BILL GATES

Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft along with his ex-wife, Melinda Gates are well known for their charitable donations. Estimated to be worth over $130 billion, Gates has given away over $50 billion over the years to various non-profit organizations and causes that he is passionate about. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's vision is to 'Improve the quality of life for individuals around the world.' As two of the world's biggest philanthropists, they have found a way to make the world a better place through their common goal of giving back.

WARREN BUFFETT

Warren Buffett has given more than $46 billion to charity and is known as one of the world's biggest philanthropists. Buffett is believed to be on the top of the list of the 10 richest people in the world. Along with his generosity as a philanthropist, Buffett is also known for his commitment to living modestly, his humility and his strong values lead to an extraordinary life.

SERENA WILLIAMS

Serena Williams is a superstar on the tennis court and is just as big a star when it comes to philanthropic endeavours. Serena sells her daughter's clothing on Poshmark and donates proceeds to the Williams Sisters Fund, which uses the money for violence prevention, education and athletic engagement.

J.K. ROWLING

J.K. Rowling, the author of the best-selling *Harry Potter* books has captivated people all over the world with her spellbinding characters in a magical world. She is also considered as one of the world's high-impact philanthropists. From books, movies, theme parks, and merchandise sales, Rowling quickly rose to billionaire status. She has become a philanthropic role model and helps children who have been wrongfully separated from their families and placed in orphanages. She supports child welfare programs by advocating for and funding various education, health and social care system reforms.

OPRAH WINFREY

Oprah Winfrey, who grew up in a poor household enduring sexual abuse, still managed to overcome the many obstacles she faced and found major success. She has donated millions of dollars through the Oprah Winfrey Charitable Foundation including contributing more than $140 million to The Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls.

MICHAEL JORDAN

Michael Jordan is one of the most talented NBA players of all time, but he has transcended that role to become one of the most influential celebrity philanthropists in the nation.

He has made multimillion-dollar donations to Friends of the

Children, donated $2 million to Hurricane Florence relief efforts and has served as Make-A-Wish's Chief Wish Ambassador since 2008, and donated $10 million to open two new medical clinics in his hometown. He continues to grow by making a big difference in the lives of others.

JEFF BEZOS

Jeff Bezos, the founder and former CEO of Amazon, often referred to as the richest man in the world, contributed over $2 billion through his Bezos Day One Fund, mostly to non-profits that help homeless families. He is also creating non-profit preschools in low-income communities.

Why did these people give away, while others did not? Either they wanted to create good *Karma*, or they realized that nothing which belonged to them was actually theirs. Whatever be their reason, the fact is that nothing is ours.

Everything that we get in this world is a trust. It comes into our hands and then it goes. It is a fact that we did not bring anything with us, just as it is true that we cannot take anything with us. It may seem that we created our wealth, but all this is a part of the show called Life on earth. Those who realize that everything that belongs to them is actually not theirs, but is just a trust, learn to Give before they are Gone. They don't accumulate wealth thinking that it is mine, only for it to be ultimately left behind. If only we realize this truth, not only will we give, but we will enjoy the bliss that comes from giving. And finally, when we die, people will cry – that

we lived a life of kindness and compassion.

Finally, who is the one who causes this misconception, this misunderstanding that everything is mine? It is the ego. As long as we do not realize that our ego is our enemy, we will hesitate in giving and our living on earth will be meaningless. Those who go on a quest, to identify 'who am I,' are the fortunate ones. When they realize the truth that I am not 'I', that the ego itself is an illusion, then giving becomes easy. Unfortunately, very few people go on a quest, to discover the truth about themselves. Very few people reach that state of Self-Realization to realize that we are not the body that will die. We are not the mind that we cannot find, and we are not the ego that keeps on repeating, 'I', 'me' and 'mine'. This is the ultimate secret that will make us realize that nothing is ours. Even though we read this a hundred times, the Mind and Ego, ME, will refuse to accept that nothing is ours. We will just continue earning and earning and then, our journey will be over. We will forget to give as we live and we will die. Then, if we cry, look up at the sky and ask, 'why we did not give', it is of no use. We must Give before we are Gone.

A friend of mine who recently died of cancer in a hospital bed in Hong Kong, said with tears in his eyes, 'If only I had lived my life spending and giving away what I have earned, I would have died a happier man.' He was a millionaire, but he suddenly developed cancer, and before he realized it, it was time to go. Will we ever realize that nothing is ours, before the end of our show?

Always give without remembering and always receive without forgetting.

Brian Tracy

03

DEATH IS CERTAIN

Every 'body' must die.
Nobody can escape death.
Is there a doubt that you will not lose your breath?

Can you escape death? No 'body' can! Only the body dies, and we, the ones who were alive in the body, pass on. That is why our near and dear ones do not hesitate to cremate the body that is dead. Nobody can escape the phenomenon of death. Every living creature that is born, must die. If we arrive on the planet, we must prepare to depart one day. Somehow, we start to believe that we will be here forever. That is why we earn, and we continue to earn, only for others to burn what we earn after we die. If only we realize the truth that this body will die, we will have a different paradigm of life.

What exactly is death and how does it happen? Does anybody know when they will die? Death is in the hands of the Divine. Both birth and death are not in our control. Just as we did not decide our birth — when, where or to whom we were born, we have no control on our death. Somebody may die when they are 5 years old and somebody may live up to 95. Sure, every living creature has a life span. A fly may live for a day, a butterfly for two weeks, a dog for around 12 years and a human being till he is about 100. However, nobody can live forever. The life expectancy of a human being in Africa may be 50 years and in Japan 90 years, although the average global life expectancy is about 70-75 years.

Very few of us understand the reality of life and death. Some of us even contemplate suicide, thinking that we can end our miseries on earth. We don't realize that only the body dies. The one who was alive in the body, the mind and ego, ME, returns to earth in a rebirth, carrying its *Karma*. The cycle goes on and on. We die and we are reborn. Nobody can escape the

cycle of birth and death. While we cannot control what is unfolding in our life, because it is based on our past actions, our past *Karma*, we can surely control our present actions, our present *Karma*, and thereby take charge of our future, our destiny. If we Give before we are Gone, and we serve people on the street, helping them get back on their feet, there is no doubt that our good *Karma*, will create good circumstances in our life that will unfold. Our good deeds will become seeds that will determine our destiny. However, as long as we are alive and we create *Karma*, the cycle of birth and death will continue. We cannot prevent the cycle. The only way to escape from death, is to escape from birth, because everybody who is born will die. But the one who is liberated from the cycle of death and rebirth, transcends *Karma* and is united with the Divine. Such a person is said to be a realized Soul and is liberated from *Samsara*, the cycle of life and death. Very few people, however, go on a quest, and understand the phenomenon of death and the truth of life. At death, one of two things happens. When the body dies, the mind and ego carries its *Karma* and is reborn in a new body. However, in a few rare cases, when the person experiences Self-Realization, realizing that he is not the body, mind and ego, in such a case, when the body dies, the mind and ego cease to exist, and therefore, there is no *Karma*. The realized Soul is liberated from the cycle of death and rebirth and is united with the Divine. In either case, life on earth is just a show and we are actors that come and go. If we don't give what belongs to us, it will ultimately, be snatched away and spent as per the will of others. If we want to spend what we have earnt as per our choice, then we must put it into our head, that we must spend before we are dead.

Isn't it clear that only the body dies? The body is made up of the 5 elements of matter, of flesh, organs, skin and bone. One day, this body will die. But the body is only the hardware. The software of the human body, known as the inner instrument or *Antahkarana*, the mind, intellect, memory and ego, together leave the gross body that dies to return in a new body as per *Karm*a. Those who realize that this subtle body is caused due to ignorance, realize that they are in fact, the Divine Soul, the Spirit or *Atman*, that is birthless and deathless. It is immortal. This liberates them from death and rebirth. This makes them realize that nothing belongs to them and they give, and keep on giving. This is the mark of a realized Soul. But those who are ignorant of the truth, not only refuse to give when they are alive, but continue to suffer the misery of the body, mind and ego, till they are dead. Those who give, either give because it is a good *Karma*, and hope to return in a happy rebirth or they give realizing that they are the Divine Soul, and are liberated from death and united with the Divine. The problem comes with those who don't give. They live with ignorance, and they die. What they could have given is wasted and snatched away from them at death.

Those who understand the phenomenon of death realize that this ephemeral life is temporary and transitory. They realize the importance of giving and experience the joy, the bliss that comes from the act of sharing whatever they have with others. They realize nothing belongs to them and therefore, have no hesitation in giving away whatever they have. Because they realize that death can happen at any point of time, they do not delay in giving. A few amongst them, give with the Realization

that every recipient is not the body that they appear to be, they are in fact, manifestations of the Divine that appear in human form.

Do you give? Do you realize that your life is not going to last forever? Do you realize that nothing was yours, is yours or will remain yours? Have you experienced the joy of giving? Are you going to Give before you are Gone? Or are you going to return after your end in another bend, another new life? This cycle will continue again and again. The world has been created in such a manner that none of us can escape death. None of us can take anything with us. But we can enjoy giving what is ours and ultimately, realize the truth about life, and be liberated from this world of suffering and united with the Divine.

Service to others is
the rent you pay for your room here on earth.

Mohammed Ali

04

OTHERS WILL BURN WHAT WE EARN

We spend our entire Life so that we can earn and earn,
But what we don't spend, others will burn!

Most people live as if they will never die. They behave as if their wealth and all that belongs to them is eternal and will last forever. Little do they realize that when the whistle of death does blow, and it's time to go, they can take nothing out of the show. In this show, or *Leela* of life, everything is ours only to use. Then, we have to move on. Unfortunately, what we don't realize is that everything that we collected during this show on earth, was ours to spend before our end. But if we did not do so, our hard-earned money will reach the hands of those who will not spend it the way we would want it to be spent. If we were alive, we would rage seeing them burn what we worked so hard to earn.

A man asked his son, 'What will you do when you get all my money after I die?' The innocent boy smiled and said, 'Dad, I dream of buying a Ferrari and then, a villa on the Mediterranean coast. I will spend my life having fun, living in the French Riviera, and sipping exotic wines!' The father was shocked! He had so many businesses. If his son decided to burn what he had earned, having a blast in France, is this what he wanted? He was shellshocked! But in that silence, he realized that it was time for him to plan his legacy. It was time for him to invest his wealth when he still had good health. It would be a pity, he thought if his entire life's hard-earned money would be blown up by his son, in frivolous fun, that he hardly thought was important.

But isn't that the truth, the honest, but bitter truth of life? What belongs to us belongs to us as long as we are alive. Once we are dead, and we cannot use our head to decide what must be spent and where it must be invested, those who are our

successors, our heirs will take over. Now, everything is theirs! And they will do what they want to do with it. Our chance to spend it is over at our end. Our body will burn and return to earth in a rebirth, but without any of the money that we had left behind. Isn't that funny! While it sounds strange that all our wealth will be left behind on earth and we will return to earth in a rebirth empty-handed, it is the ultimate truth of life.

We don't have to feel hopeless about how life is. We don't have to worry about the fact that we will go empty-handed. After all, we have the opportunity to spend, before our end. That choice is ours! If we choose not to exercise that option, then, there is no other option but to let others burn what we earn. Will others spend our wealth after our end the way we would want to — that is a big question mark. This is because we will not be in the scene anymore. If you have any doubt, look around you. What do you see? When the rich and famous depart, what do the successors do? They blow up whatever they get in the way they think is best. Some may continue the legacy, the business or organization, while others may choose to exit and pursue their own dreams. The fact is that whatever happens after we are dead, should not fill our head. We should learn to live, to give, and whatever we have got, after we were born, we must spend before we are gone. It's up to us, whether we want to give it away, invest it, secure it, or whatever else we want to do with it. But just to leave it for others, means that we have chosen to let them burn what we earn.

Most people will be surprised, even shocked to read this. But

can we deny this fact of life? Can we deny that we will die one day? The body will perish. Can we dispute the fact that nothing will go with us? Therefore, isn't it true that nothing is really ours? We did not bring anything with us, and we cannot take anything with us. Whatever we have, we have it while we are here on earth after our birth and when it is time to go, at the end of the show, we have to leave everything behind. But we have a choice. We can Give before we are Gone. We can give to who we like, the way we like and when we like. However, not giving and going means leaving everything that was ours to be burned and what we earned, will not reach where we want it to reach.

Somehow, the world believes that life is about earning and earning. They climb from one peak of success to the next peak of achievement. They keep adding zeros to their wealth and ultimately, they die. They are not prepared for that moment of death. Although they know it all along, they ignore the reality of death and what lies beyond. They just continue running in that race, to be an ace, and they get caught in the maze. They never learn to live with grace. When will we realize that we must Give before we are Gone? When will we realize that the body will die, but we will be reborn? When will we understand that there is a Law of *Karma* that operates on earth and if there is no Self-Realization, we will return to earth in a rebirth, empty handed? When will we realize that our birth is decided by our *Karma*, our past actions? If our present actions are not good, but evil, then we will return to earth in a rebirth and suffer.

But what if we Give, before we are Gone? What if we spend before our end? What if we do not give others an opportunity to burn what we earn? If we give to the right causes and spend in the right way, we will create good *Karma*. The deeds that we do, will become seeds that we plant, the fruits of which will come to us, once we are gone and reborn. But how many of us realize this? We foolishly let others burn what we earn, we don't spend before our end, we don't Give before we are Gone. Have you found many people in this world who give away everything before they finish their journey of life? It is very rare. Most of us live with ignorance. We don't understand the true meaning of life and therefore, we don't Give before we are Gone.

It is only those people who Give before they are Gone who create good *Karma*, who are actually making the best of what they earn. They are the ones who are investing by giving. They are the ones who understand that what we give today, we can receive in the life beyond death when we are reborn. But not many of us understand this.

No one is useless in this world
who lightens the burdens of another.

Charles Dickens

05

UNDERSTANDING LIFE

What is life, have you ever thought?
Or in the fairy tales and myths, you are caught?
Life is not shuttling between pleasure and strife,
Liberation from Ignorance and Finding Enlightenment is LIFE.

How many people actually understand what the meaning of life is? How many people contemplate what life is all about? Do they wonder about how they arrived on this planet? What was the cause of their birth? People just think, 'My parents gave me life,' but isn't this a lie? Our parents for sure were responsible for the act of copulation that caused the fertilization and created the zygote. But did they decide who I would be, whether I would be a male or female and whether I would even arrive on the planet in 9 months? Our parents had no control over our life!

Our life is controlled by the Supreme Power, the Supreme Immortal Power we can refer to as SIP. The Supreme Power is in control of everything that happens on earth, our death, our birth. But most of us don't realize the truth about this Power. In fact, not only are we ignorant about SIP, we are ignorant about life itself.

What is life? The acronym of the word 'Life' itself reveals what life is all about. LIFE is Liberation from Ignorance and Finding true Enlightenment. But how many of us understand that the journey of life is this, Liberation from ignorance and finding Enlightenment? We live and we die, we don't even know why. What was the purpose of our birth on earth? When something goes wrong, we look at the sky, we cry, and we ask 'why?' because we think God lives somewhere up in the sky and that one day, we will go to heaven or hell. We do not overcome our ignorance and find Enlightenment.

The Purpose of Life is Liberation. It is to attain freedom from

the cycle of death and rebirth. It is to escape from the triple suffering that we human beings experience on earth, the pain of the body, the misery of the mind and the agony of the ego. This freedom comes when we are Enlightened with the truth, that we are not the body, mind and ego that we appear to be. We are the Divine Soul. But not many of us realize this truth about life.

If we ponder on our birth, we will realize that we were born 9 months before our 'birth day'. The day we have been cutting our birthday cake is fake! We were conceived 9 months before. This body that appears to be me, is just like a dress I am wearing. We will continue to change bodies, life after life as we return to earth in a repeated rebirth, carrying our *Karma*. How many of us realize this? We think life is just to have fun, till it is done. We don't like to talk about death. We consider it to be an unpleasant topic and so we don't realize the truth. The body dies, but we are not the body. People say that we passed away. They are so sure that we left the body that they burn it or bury it under the ground. Would they dare destroy the body if we were alive inside it? Imagine waking up one morning and finding your loved ones burning your body. Impossible! How could this ever happen! They will only cremate the body when they are sure that we have departed. Who departed? Where did the deceased go? How many of us stop to ask these questions to be enlightened with the truth? Very few! We know that about 1% of this world is visually blind, but we don't know that 99% of the world is spiritually blind. We don't realize that we are the Divine Spirit, the Immortal Soul or *Atman*, that leaves the body at death.

What is life all about? Is it just a journey? What is the destination? Those who realize the truth about life realize that the earth is a humongous stage and we, just actors. We come and we go, and everything that is happening is nothing but a show. Of course, we have a free will. Only a human being can choose. Only man has the power of discrimination. The trees and the bees, the dogs and the frogs cannot discriminate, cannot choose. They can just live and die. They have a Soul like human beings, but their life is just meant to be consumed. They don't create any new *Karma*. These are very deep questions and a few people, less than 1% of humanity goes on a quest to understand the true meaning of life. However, at least 20% of the world knows what life is about. They know the purpose of our existence. They know that this is just a show and that we are here to come and go. About one fifth of the world knows about *Karma*, the law and they live their life doing good deeds, knowing that they are seeds which are being planted and which will create their future destiny.

Those who understand the true meaning of life also realize that nothing belongs to them. They brought nothing with them and they will take nothing. Still, not all of them have the courage to Give before they Go, to spend before their end. This is because, although many of us have the knowledge about life, we do not have the Realization. Unless there is Realization, our knowledge will remain knowledge and we will take our wealth after we destroy our health into our graves. Can we spend a dime after our time is over? How many of us realize that life is like a glass full of years? We empty our glass of life and fill it with wealth. In the end, we

have a glass full of money, but isn't it funny that our glass of life is empty. Of what use is the money?

Somehow, because we have not understood the meaning of life, we let our need become our greed. Instead of living life with contentment and fulfilment, we become slaves of achievement and the destination of Enlightenment misses our attention. Very few people are fortunate to understand the meaning of life. Those who are fortunate, are often guided by a Spiritual Master, a mentor known as Guru.

The word Guru comes from the word *Gu* which means darkness and the word *Ru*, which means light. Guru is the one who takes us from *Gu* to *Ru*, from darkness to light. He helps us understand the meaning of life and attain Enlightenment. Not everybody is fortunate to meet a true Guru who can help them reach the destination, Enlightenment. A true Guru is always available on the path of a sincere seeker. That is why it is said that when the disciple is ready, the Guru will appear. He will come, hold our hand, and lead us across the shore. Unfortunately, many so-called Gurus can take us the other way. Then we will be caught in the cycle of repeated death and rebirth on earth. Therefore, finding an enlightened Guru is one of the biggest challenges of life. If we don't take the guidance of a true Guru, there are very less chances of us realizing the true meaning of life, being liberated from this world, and being united with the Divine.

Not only do we need the guidance of the Guru, but we also need the grace of God. First of all, we have to understand that

God is not God. The moment we say 'God', somebody thinks of Krishna, somebody thinks of Shiva, and somebody else, Jesus. There are thousands of Gods in the world. But in reality, these Gods are not Gods. They are a figment of man's imagination. God is not made of bone and skin. God is a Power that dwells within. God is energy that manifests everywhere in this world. Those who understand the true meaning of life, go on to realize God. They realize God is SIP, the Supreme Immortal Power. That is why they don't ask the silly question, 'Who created God?' They know that God has no Creator. God is the source of all creation. God is SIP. They do not celebrate the birthday of God. They realize that God is birthless and deathless, beginningless and endless. God is without name and form. Those who realize that God is a Supreme Power, stop asking questions about God. They know God is beyond definition and human comprehension. *One day, a seeker of God asked his Spiritual Master, 'Show me God. I want to see God'. The Master explained that God is a Power. We have to realize God. But the seeker would not budge. So, the Master reluctantly agreed to make him understand that God is SIP. He asked him to stand on the table, remove the electric bulb that was glowing and said, 'Put your finger inside the holder'. The innocent seeker just followed, only to jump and fall with the shock screaming, 'What kind of joke is this?'. The Master explained, 'Can you see electricity? When you switch on the bulb and it glows, you know the Power exists. You can't see the Power, but because you insisted, I let you touch the Power. God is SIP. We cannot see God or find God. We have to realize God as SIP'.*

What is the way to Realize God? For God-Realization to

happen, first there must be Self-Realization, the Realization that we are not this body that will die, not even the Mind and Ego, ME. The mind doesn't exist. It is just a bundle of thoughts. If you try to find the mind, you can't. The ego says 'I', but who is this 'I'? Is it the one that was in the mother's womb, still developing as the embryo or is it the baby that was born? Is 'I' the one who walked with the body and the head, or is 'I' the one that lay dead on the bed? The 'I' keeps changing. The one who says 'I' finally has to die. Who is this 'I'? When we realize we are not the body, mind and ego, we come to realize that we are the Power of life, the Divine Spirit, the *Atman*, the Soul. This is the way to go further to realize that everybody alive is not what they appear to be on the outside. They are the Power of life. In fact, we all are empowered by the same Supreme Power, but we don't realize that we are one. When we realize this, it is God-Realization. Then, we see everything beautiful as a manifestation of SIP. We realize the truth about life. We accept that SIP is the one reality. Everything else is an illusion, an appearance, a manifestation of SIP.

The moment we realize that we are the Divine Soul, we are a part of SIP, the Supreme Immortal Power, we become absolutely sure that nothing is ours. This world is a show, we come and go. We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are Divine Spirits, having a human experience, because our Mind and Ego, ME carries its *Karma* and returns to earth in a rebirth. Because we are taught the wrong things, we do not realize the truth about life.

Those who seek the truth, understand the true meaning of

life. They realize that this world is just a show and realize we cannot take anything when we go. Although they know this truth beyond doubt, still they suffer, because of the war that wages within. There is the mind that is bombarding them with thoughts that are myths and there is the intellect, empowered by Consciousness that is fighting the myths with the truth. This war continues till that moment that they are enlightened with the truth, or they die, without realizing, 'Who am I?' and they return to this world as they cry. Have you ever wondered why a little baby enters this world crying and not laughing?

How can we win the war? How can we realize who we are and why we are here? How can we reach that state where we have the courage to Give before we Go? It is only when we overcome ignorance that we will be enlightened with the truth and spend before our end. Unless we understand the meaning of life and have the several Realizations that will spark our Enlightenment, we will continue to live with ignorance, only to suffer on earth and finally return in a rebirth. The ones who overcome their ignorance happily Give before they are Gone, hoping not to be reborn.

This river of kindness flows through each
and every one of us, connecting us.
Because kindness is more than just medicine.
The act of giving and receiving is
where the real magic of human connection occurs.

Leon Logothesis

06

OVERCOMING IGNORANCE

Because we are ignorant,
we don't learn to give.
And being ignorant of this ignorance,
We just die after we live!

How does a typical human being live? He spends his first quarter of life learning and then, he spends the next quarter of his life earning. Thereafter, instead of giving, before he is gone, he gets caught in his greed although he has fulfilled his need. He doesn't realize that one day he will go. He just continues to row his boat till ultimately, he will blink and sink, without realizing his ignorance.

How many of us realize that we are ignorant? How many of us try to find out the basic truth of, 'Who am I and Why am I here?' How many of us stop questioning everything we are taught? How many of us dare to question our religion? We are told that it is blasphemous to question the scriptures and we blindly, ignorantly, follow the herd. How many of us have the courage to open our wings and fly like a bird, to cut the strings of beliefs, superstitions, and habits that have become compulsory rituals in our life? Very few amongst us go on a quest, to ask questions, investigate and realize the truth. Most of us live like a sailboat and we sail wherever the wind makes us go. Is it because we do not want to realize the truth or is it because we do not realize that we are ignorant about it? As long as man lives in ignorance and does not realize his ignorance, he will live in this trance and he will just dance, till the end of the show. Then, he will die and because he did not question, 'Why?' he will just return to earth in a rebirth. The cycle will go on and on. Whatever he had, which he thought was his, he did not give before he left. He thought it was his to keep. But then he has to weep! When the final moment of death knocks at his door, everything that was his, he has to leave behind and there is no sadder moment in a man's life

than to feel that everything that belonged to him is being snatched away.

The ones who overcome ignorance, learn to Give before they are Gone. Either they are so spiritually evolved that they give because they don't want to be reborn or they give because they believe that this is a good deed, and it will become the seed for their future happiness. Whatever be the reason, one who gives, truly lives with joy, peace and love. He experiences bliss that is greater than any happiness. But the one who gives overcoming ignorance, not only experiences bliss when alive but transcends all misery and is ultimately liberated and united with the Divine.

What is the ignorance that we must overcome? First, we are ignorant about who we are, we foolishly believe that we are the body that appears in the mirror. That is why when we see our image in a group photograph, we scream with glee and say, 'that is me!'. We are not the body that we appear to be. When will we be free from this ignorance? The body makes us believe that I am 'I' and the mind, creates thoughts that make us live with fear, worry, stress, and anxiety. But where is the mind? If you try to find the mind, you can't! Still, we live with ignorance and keep saying, 'My mind is wandering'. There is no mind! It is just a bundle of thoughts. The Mind along with the Ego, becomes ME, our biggest enemy and we don't realize it. We continue doing deeds, both good and bad, and then, this becomes *Karma* and becomes the cause for us to return in a new body to the planet. But if we are ignorant about all this, we are ignorant that we are not the body, the mind, and the

ego, and that is why we don't give. We just live with ignorance till we die because we never realize, 'Who am I?'

We are ignorant that we are the Divine Soul. Some people call it the Soul, the Spirit, the *Atman*, the *Ruh*, the *Chi*, or the life force. We may give that energy any name, but the fact is that we are that Power that is birthless and deathless. The fact is that we are part of SIP, the Supreme Immortal Power that is conceived 9 months before our birthday and departs at the moment of death. Because we don't realize we are this Divine Soul, and a part of the Supreme Power, we get caught in this illusory world and our ignorance makes us suffer, again and again. First, we suffer the triple suffering of the body, mind and ego on earth, then our ignorance makes us return in a rebirth, only to suffer again and again and again.

As long as we are ignorant and don't realize that we are a manifestation of the Divine, we cling to everything, thinking it belongs to us when in reality, everything is just an illusion. Nothing is ours. Our Mind and Ego, ME fools us into believing this, just as our senses seek pleasure and the desires make us crave till we reach our grave. People who do not realize the truth are baffled. They find it far easier to believe in the fairy tales and to follow the herd that believes in the myth. Although we were born 9 months before, we cut our cake on our birthday, which is fake, because we did not stop to question when I was actually born. Because we don't realize we are the Divine Soul, our mind creates duality and separates us from each other, even from God. This ignorance stops us from not only giving but also forgiving because we don't

realize we are all one. We fight with each other. Countries wage wars in the name of religion, culture, nationality or for petty possessions which don't even belong to us, and which will be ultimately left behind. Because we are ignorant, we live with hate, anger, revenge, and jealousy, not realizing that nothing is mine.

The moment there is Realization, our ignorance disappears. It is like living in complete darkness. We cannot see anything, till we switch on the light. The moment we switch on the light, our vision is transformed. We are enlightened and the darkness that caused our ignorance disappears, and we can see everything. While we understand darkness and light in the material world, our ignorance does not permit us to realize the darkness and the light in the spiritual world. We do not realize the truth, and we do not attain that state of Enlightenment. Our outside may be very bright, but our inside is full of darkness.

Man is said to be like a 9-door city. He has 9 openings that all see outside – two openings of the eyes, two of the nose, two of the ears, one mouth, one organ of excretion and one of procreation. All the 9 doors that man has, open outside. Thus no door opens within to light up who we truly are. When man opens his 10^{th} door, he is enlightened. He overcomes his ignorance, realizes who he truly is, and starts to give as he lives. But as long as man is ignorant, he doesn't realize who he is, why he is here, what he must do, and what his purpose is. He lives in the merry-go-round of life, going round in circles, experiencing pleasure and pain, loss and gain, sun and rain and he goes round and round, again and again. He is ignorant

of the possibility that he can live a life of eternal bliss and happiness. He only knows of momentary pleasure that makes him glad, but soon, he is sad again. As long as man is ignorant, this cycle continues.

When will we overcome our ignorance? When will we learn to give as we live? When will we realize that nothing is ours? When will we go on a quest to realize the truth? When will we switch on the light and be enlightened? Unfortunately, man doesn't realize that just like you can't take a broom and sweep away the darkness from a room, the only way is to have a light, so also, man needs to overcome his ignorance of darkness through Enlightenment, by asking questions, investigating, until he experiences and realizes the truth.

How many of us check into a hotel room and then, order it to be painted with a fresh coat of paint? Then, buy a special sofa, and even fit lights into the hotel room? 'Ridiculous', you would say! 'Nobody does that! It is just a hotel'. So also, when we check out of the hotel, do we pack the pillows, the blankets and take the lights with us? Of course not! Only a fool would attempt to do that. While we understand the analogy that our vacation in a hotel is temporary, we just check-in and we have to check out, our ignorance does not permit us to realize that this world is also a journey, an experience. We come and we go. We cannot take anything with us. We have to leave everything behind. Those who realize this simple truth, learn to give. Those who don't, continue to live with ignorance, thinking everything is mine, till one fine day, they are gone!

Ignorance is the main cause for a man not to give and not to truly live. Ignorance is the main cause for a man to suffer. Ignorance is the main cause for us to return to earth in a rebirth. If only we overcome ignorance and we realize the truth, we will not only give, but we will live with so much bliss and love that it will spread joy, peace and tranquillity that will make our life fulfilling. When will we start our quest? When will we begin our journey? When will we switch on the light?

We make a living by what we get.
We make a life by what we give.

Winston Churchill

07

WHY DON'T PEOPLE GIVE?

Sometimes, I wonder,
why people don't give?
They let others snatch it,
but don't spend as they live!

It is strange to see people becoming richer and richer, only to ultimately die, taking nothing with them. Is it because people don't know that they will die? Is it because they think they can carry their wealth beyond death? Is it because they don't experience joy in giving? What causes people to earn and earn and ultimately, they burn, and everything they own is lost in a flash!

There are many reasons why people don't give. One primary reason is the fear of becoming poor. People are afraid — what if they give and then there is nobody to help them when there is a need? This fear of becoming poor paralyzes people when it comes to giving. Although they have a lot, fear stops them. What is fear? F E A R means a False Expectation Appearing Real. It is only a trick of their imagination, but their fear appears to be real and so, they are paranoid and paralyzed. They have so much that even if they give a little of what they have, it will make no difference. But *Fear makes the wolf seem bigger than it is*. It makes them insecure and they fear living on the street.

Haven't you heard of many a story where parents give away everything to their children, only to find themselves homeless, penniless, struggling to survive? They end up in a destitute home with tears. Is it necessary to give away everything that you have and end up being a beggar? This is another extreme in giving, where you are careless and reckless. One must refrain from reaching such a position, but just because there have been others, who have foolishly managed their wealth, it does not mean that one should not Give before they are Gone.

No doubt money is an important factor, and one must control their money efficiently in their lifetime. But just as we must control our money while we live, we must also manage it so that it is distributed in the right way, at our death. Otherwise, if we don't give, and we are gone, then, everything will be wasted. These are two extremes we see and both extremes must be avoided because in one extreme, we lose everything and in the second extreme, we waste everything. Neither should we lose or waste, we should use our resources effectively so that there is fulfilment at the end of the journey.

Just imagine you have tons of money, gems, jewels, valuables and properties, and you are confused about who to give it to before you die. You are also insecure, and you fear being left on the street with all your wealth snatched away from you. And so, you don't give away anything. Your insecurity makes you cling to everything and then you die! Whether you like it or not, your near and dear ones will snatch away what was yours. And what you did not use, you finally had to lose, because you did not Give before you were Gone.

Many wealthy, elderly people have a huge insecurity syndrome. They have seen several elderly parents cry because their children cheated them and snatched away everything. Because they are insecure, they are not willing to give a penny. Little do they realize that ultimately, nothing will belong to them.

Those who don't use their money and are forced to lose it at death, have wasted their life, just as those who carelessly gave up everything, live with regret as they struggle after they

have given everything away. Our challenge is to find a path that can help us Give before we are Gone, without having to face the situation of becoming a beggar. There are ways where we can protect ourselves and ensure that our wealth is distributed when we are in good health, rather than have people fight for our assets when we are in the coffin.

Whatever be the reason, not giving away our wealth before we die is the worst option. We may assign our wealth and property to deserving people but leaving it behind only means that it will reach the hands of those who do not deserve it. We must remember that nothing is ours because we brought nothing with us, and we can take nothing when we go. Such is the show! When we do not Give before we Go, it means that we wasted an opportunity, whatever be the reason.

We must learn the art of surrender. After all, everything unfolds as per a Divine will and as per our past actions, our *Karma*. We can't change our past *Karma*. They are already done, but we can choose our present *Karma*. Having done that, the next thing we need to do is to surrender and accept the Divine will. We have no choice. Whatever is unfolding will unfold. Nothing can stop it. But we have a free will. We can use our intellect to discriminate, but thereafter, we are helpless. We must surrender. We have no option. Sometimes, it looks like bad things happen to good people. This is not possible as per the Law of *Karma*. Therefore, we have no choice but to surrender and let go. Giving is also an act of surrender. Once we give, we trust the Divine and we surrender

our life to the Divine. We don't live with fear, with worry. We believe that the Divine is in control of everything. For the Divine, nothing is impossible. Nothing happens against the will of the Divine. We may wonder whether the Divine interferes with *Karma*. What we don't realize is that even the Law of *Karma* is controlled by SIP, the Supreme Immortal Power. When we give with complete faith and trust, we surrender to the Divine just like a sailboat that trusts the waters of the ocean. Of course, we have already discussed that we should use our intelligence while giving, but once we give, there is no looking back. We must protect our life and live, but when the time comes to go, we should have given everything away. This is to have truly lived a meaningful life.

Those who don't believe in the Power of the Divine, those who do not live with FAITH – Full Assurance In The Heart, HOPE, Having Only Positive Expectations, TRUST– Total Reliance Unconditional Surrender to The Almighty, such people cannot give. Such people live with doubt, despair, and pessimism. They do not even trust in SIP, the Supreme Immortal Power. They believe in ghosts and devils, and mythological fairy tales. When it is time to go, at the end of the show, they have tons of money, property and wealth that is wasted because they did not trust and did not give before they moved on.

Unfortunately, we submit to the mind and its thoughts. The mind constantly produces negative thoughts, creating fear, stress, worry, anxiety, and depression. These negative thoughts become the toxic energy that stops us from the act of

philanthropy. The negative thoughts steal our compassion and kindness and make us live with insecurity. Ultimately, toxic thoughts become toxic feelings and toxic actions. That is why we end up with a toxic destiny. We may have millions when it comes to money in the bank. But when it comes to kindness, compassion and charity, we are no better than the bankrupt beggars. Our life has not only been wasted but the opportunity to achieve the ultimate purpose of life is lost.

Remember, there is joy in giving and when we do not give, we deprive ourselves of the joy. When we go, nothing will be ours anyway. But when we give, we experience deep happiness. Whatever we do not give, will not go with us and we have no doubt about this. Then what sense is it to live without giving, and die with so much wealth, which is uselessly left behind? When will the world wake up to realize this deep act of foolish ignorance? It is time for the world to wake up and to Give before they are Gone. It is time for the spiritually blind to remove their spiritual cataract. It is time for the world to realize that giving is not an option!

Life's persistent and most urgent question is,
'What are you doing for others?

Martin Luther King Jr.

08

MAYA AND LEELA

This world is not real, it's just a Cosmic Illusion.
This world is just a show. But we live in confusion.
Because we think that everything is real, we want to grow and grow.
But in the end, we understand, it's all just a show.

Those who understand the terms, *Maya* and *Leela* are sure to Give before they are Gone. They realize that this world is *Maya*, it's just an illusion. Anybody reading this for the first time will be shocked. How can this brick-and-mortar world ever be considered to be virtual? They understand the meaning of a dream and think that the dream is just a dream. But they think that the world is not a dream, it is real. It is not an illusion. Let us examine whether the world is real or *Maya*, a Cosmic Illusion.

Those who realize that this world is a *Leela*, are also blessed with the attitude - 'Let me Give before I Go'. Why? Because they come to terms with the truth that this world is nothing more than a show, a movie, a drama. Again, a newcomer to this concept will be flabbergasted. How can this world be considered a movie, a show, or a theatre? We shall examine this too so that we can conclude that the world is a *Leela*, a humongous drama that is being enacted on this stage called the earth.

We all have dreams. In a dream, suppose you lend me a large sum of money. When you wake up from your sleep, would you come to me and ask me to sign the document of borrowing? Would you demand back the money that you gave me in your dream? Ridiculous! It was just a dream. There was no real transaction. It was an illusion. But suppose the same transaction happened when you were awake. I came to you and borrowed a large sum of money. You would document it and take my signature on the printed agreement. Therefore, we consider a dream to be just a dream, but life to be real. Those who realize the truth, realize that life too is nothing

more than a dream. The only difference is that the dream gets over when we get up in the morning. Life gets over at death. But ultimately, life too is nothing more than a dream.

What is an illusion? It is something that appears to be but is not. We are familiar with a mirage in the desert. There appears to be an oasis far away, but in reality, there is no oasis. It is just a mirage. It is common to experience seeing a large patch of water while driving on a road in summer. We imagine that there is water ahead, but as we drive to that point, the water disappears. It was not there at all. It was just an illusion, an appearance. While we are quite familiar with illusions of the world, we don't contemplate and learn from the illusion that this world itself is *Maya*, a huge Cosmic Illusion. We understand that the rainbow may appear to be a beautiful band of the seven colours of VIBGYOR, but can we hug the rainbow? It appears to be there. We can even take a photograph, but we can't catch a rainbow. It is just an appearance.

Seekers of the Spiritual truth understand the concept of *Maya* or Cosmic Illusion. They realize that this world or *Jagat* is *Mithya*, unreal, temporary, transitory. They contemplate a gold ring. While everybody says it is a ring, they realize that without gold, there is nothing. Gold is the cause. The ring is just an effect. It is an appearance, a manifestation of gold. This world too appears to be, but in reality, everything is energy. Every molecule of matter in this world, as endorsed by science too, is nothing but energy. Energy appears as matter, and matter transmutes back into energy. This constant transmutation of energy and matter is recorded by scientists as the 'Wave-Particle Duality'. This is spiritually termed as *Maya*.

Maya has two powers – first, it conceals the truth, then it projects the myth. Those who are new to *Maya*, cannot understand what it means. However, they understand that when they go to a theatre, at first they see a blank white screen. The projector projects images and sounds. The screen disappears. The projection appears. Many people think the movie to be real. Some people even cry, they shed tears, becoming emotional as they watch the movie. Is the movie real? No, it is just a projection. But we get fooled by it! *Maya* does exactly that. *Maya* hides the reality and projects the myth. *Maya* stops us from realizing the truth and thus, we are carried away by the myth, we think that this world is real, and we don't give. Finally, we are gone.

The one who understands that this world is *Maya*, a Cosmic Illusion, realizes we are nothing. We come from nothing, and we go into nothing. We are all part of SIP, the Supreme Immortal Power. We are all one. Therefore, they do not believe that anything belongs to them. They realize that everything is part of *Maya*. They have no hesitation to Give before they are Gone. Those who don't understand *Maya*, think that this world is real and their mind does not let them give because they live with insecurity and ignorance.

Those who understand *Maya*, also understand *Leela*. This entire world appears real. But in reality, it is a projection. This world is a humongous stage. *Maya* is projecting life that is unfolding as per *Karma*, our past actions. We are all actors. We come and we go. This world is nothing but a show! Very few amongst us realize that this world is a *Leela*. If we do, we not

only give but also continue giving everything, till we have nothing left. This is our goal.

But we cannot do it until we realize that we are the Divine Soul. As long as we live as the body, mind and ego, we will think that this *Leela*, this drama is real. We will not understand that everything that is happening on the earth stage, is nothing more than a theatre. The storyboard is written, produced, and directed by the Supreme Immortal Power, SIP, the Creator. Everything that is happening in this world is automated as it is connected to the Law of *Karma*. There is no manual or Divine intervention. The illusion continues day after day, just as our ignorance keeps us in the dark. Because of our ignorance, we are stingy and greedy. The emotions of generosity, kindness and sharing do not surface in our life. Those who realize *Maya* and *Leela*, accept and enjoy the show and they Give before they Go.

The realized ones do not let their life become full of desire, craving and passion. They realize that desires will never quench our thirst. Ultimately, they will make us burst. The truly happy ones evolve from achievement to fulfilment, living fully satisfied and content lives. This is because they realize *Maya* and *Leela*. Do you realize that this world is *Maya*, it is just a *Leela*? If you realize that this world is *Maya*, only a *Leela*, chances are you will be the one who gives and then goes, not one who goes and then the wealth flows and is wasted and lost.

Wherever there is a human being,
there is an opportunity for a kindness.

Seneca

09

GIVE NOW

Make a vow,
That you will give now.
Find a reason to give,
But give anyhow.

If you really want to live a life of bliss, peace, and happiness, then learn to give. This means you must get into action now. You must make giving a habit, just as some people have made storing a habit, they go on collecting, hoarding, and keeping, both what they need and what they don't need to! *They don't realize that whatever they try to keep, they will lose when they get into that state of endless sleep.* At that moment of death, when they have no breath, whatever they have kept on storing, will be cleared in a flash, emptied, given away, because it is of no use to the dead body. Those valuables that we leave behind, will be snatched, grabbed or even stolen, by those to whom we did not want to give. Isn't this the truth, and nothing but the truth?

Therefore, we must give. First of all, we must give away whatever we don't need. There is a beautiful *mantra* or quote that we must never forget – 'When in doubt, throw it out'. Whenever you have a doubt, whether you need something or not, don't stock it. Unlock the door and give it away. Make giving a habit. Realize that the more we give, the more we get. If we don't give, we don't get. So don't be scared of giving. Such is the universal law.

Those who develop the virtue of sharing, who grow up with humanitarian values of compassion and kindness, they learn to make a difference rather than just make money and hoard the money. The habit of sharing develops the attribute of giving. Such people keep on giving. It is a part of their daily schedule. If you observe carefully, their coffers never get empty because the law of the universe says, '*As you sow, so shall you reap.*' Therefore, if you give, you will get. They enjoy

the joy that comes from giving and the joy that others experience when they receive. If you are one who has a habit of giving, it's great. Continue giving. But if you are one who is not habituated to it, start the habit of giving now and you will experience Divine bliss.

Some people give because it is good to give. Others give because the more you give, the more you get. The most evolved ones give because they realize that nothing belongs to them. They must Give before they are Gone. Whatever be your state of thought, or your philosophy of life, it is good to give.

It is most important to flip over and give if you are not in the habit of giving. Some people wonder, 'Why should I give? This is mine. It belongs to me!' They don't realize that nothing belongs to us. Everything that is ours, is just a loan, a trust, which ultimately has to be given away. We have no choice. Do you deny this? Do you deny that death is certain? Isn't it true that you have to Give before you are Gone? Then, why not start giving today and enjoy the joy of giving? Why not enjoy the Karmic law of getting whatever we give? Why not reach that state of Realization that we are not the owners of what seems to be ours? As we start giving, we will evolve on the spiritual journey.

Give now. Give something away today and consciously experience the joy, the bliss. When I started giving 40 years ago, to those who were homeless and penniless, I realized that it was the biggest blessing I could get. I used to take food packets and give them to those who were going to sleep without eating. Every packet of food I gave, received in

return, blessings that were priceless. I realized that the need of those who were homeless, was not just food, but also a blanket because of cold winter nights. I arranged for a few hundred blankets and went around the city giving those blankets to the poor who were shivering in the cold. I covered them with blankets with my own hands. Along with the blanket, I gave them my love. This transformed my life for I experienced the magic that comes from giving.

Have you experienced the joy that comes from giving? If you haven't, it is worth trying to give. I suggested something very simple to a few people some time back. I told them to carry a packet of sweets or chocolates and whenever they got an opportunity, to give one sweet to all those they met. When they did this, more often than not, the response was – 'Why are you giving us this chocolate? Is it your birthday?' This is because not too many people give. But those who tried out this experiment found it very fulfilling. You can give whatever you like and to whomsoever you like, whenever you like. But the challenge is to make giving a habit.

There is great joy in giving and when we give to those in need, that is the best deed. There are people who do not have enough food to eat. They sometimes live with just one meal a day. There are people who don't have enough clothes, while there are others who have no shelter over their heads. When we reach out to give people the basics of food, clothing and shelter, we are performing a Divine act that will not go in vain. Of course, we will receive joy in giving, but every giving is like planting a seed that will bear fruit. Unfortunately, there are many people, the wealthiest of the wealthiest, who never

learned to give as they lived. Nobody taught them the meaning of philanthropy. In contrast, there are others, even millionaires and billionaires, who give away most of their wealth to causes that are dear to their hearts. These people should inspire us to give.

Never forget that the opportunity to give is now. There may not be a tomorrow. If you don't give when you are alive, you have no option but to give it all away when you are dead. What would you choose? Start giving now. Choose to give what you want, to whom you want. But give as you live.

To do more for the world than the world does for you — that is success.

Henry Ford

10

THE LAW OF *KARMA*

Karma is a Universal Law of this earth,
It caused our birth and controls our rebirth.
As per this Law, what we give, we will get.
Nobody can escape from this Law, you can bet!

What is *Karma*? By itself, the word *Karm*a means action. But today, *Karma* has become globally known as the Law of Action and Reaction. Some people call it the law of the boomerang because they believe that what goes around, comes around. Others link it to the scripture which states, *'As you sow, so shall you reap.'* The Law of *Karma* is very simple. It is a Universal Law, and it appears in many aspects of our life. The seeds we plant, decide the fruits on the tree. So also, the deeds that we plant will decide our destiny. While we are absolutely sure about the seed and the fruit, as we are able to observe the root and the shoot, we are unable to see how Karma works and sometimes get carried away and question the existence of such a law.

This world is governed by certain Universal Laws. We do not question the existence of the Law of Gravity. That is why if we throw a ball up in the sky, it does not fly away but returns to earth. While we can see this phenomenon, we don't question what the cause of our birth was. Our birth is controlled by the Law of *Karma*, the law that brings us back to earth. Do you doubt that the sun will rise tomorrow morning? You do not doubt it because the Law of Cycles makes the earth rotate exactly once in 24 hours, causing day and night. The same Universal Law creates seasons in cycles as the earth revolves around the sun. While we don't doubt the Law of Cycles, some of us doubt the Law of *Karma*. Sadly, we question and ask, 'Why do bad things happen to good people?' We don't realize that as per the Universal Law of *Karma*, bad things can't happen to good people, just as apples can't grow on mango trees. It is not possible for the earth to stop rotating. It

is this rotation that causes day and night, or to stop revolving and have no seasons. Imagine, tomorrow our tables and chairs start flying with us in the sky, because there is no Law of Gravity. 'Impossible!' you would say because, without the Universal Law, this world cannot be governed.

The Creator, whom we refer to as SIP, the Supreme Immortal Power, has instituted several laws and we cannot escape from these laws. One such law is that of birth and death. Every living creature must die. Do we deny the existence of this law? While we know it and accept it, we do not question and realize, 'Where do we come from and where will we go?' What is the cause of our birth on earth? We do not ponder on the fact that the body comes later. We are conceived first, 9 months before our birthday. One day, the body will die, and people will say that we passed away. Then, our loved ones will destroy the body, the one who always said, it was 'I'. All this is connected with the Law of *Karma*. But because we do not understand the reality, we don't go on a quest and realize the truth, we live and die with the myth. We don't Give before we are Gone, and our ignorance ensures that we are reborn, and this goes on and on.

We must understand the Law of *Karma* first, then see how to use it effectively for our happiness and wellbeing, and finally how to transcend *Karma* to be liberated from all the suffering on earth, the triple suffering of the body, mind and ego and finally liberated from the cycle of death and rebirth. Who does *Karma*? It appears that the body does *Karma*. But in reality, the body is just an instrument that acts. The one who does the

Karma is ME, the Mind and Ego. Without the Director, ME, the actor, the body, would not act. Therefore, the *Karma* does not belong to the body, even though it seems that it is the body that is doing the action, and experiencing the consequences of *Karma*, be it pleasure or pain. Little do we realize that without the mind and ego, the body cannot even experience pleasure and pain. The feeling of pleasure and pain is experienced by not just the gross physical body, but by the subtle body that is our operating system. Just like a computer, the human-computer too has hardware or the body-complex and software or the mind-complex. However, just like a computer cannot work without a power supply, the human body too cannot function with the body and mind, its hardware and software. It needs a power supply. The power supply is the Soul. The moment the power departs, we experience death, there is no breath, and there is no more *Karma*. The body cannot perform any action, just as the Mind and Ego, ME has no power to direct any further action.

But what happens at death? Don't we know that the body dies and it is cremated or buried? Therefore, the gross aspect of us disappears into ashes. What about all the *Karma* that it did? The pending actions are like seeds that were planted but did not sprout. Those who understand *Karma*, the law, realize that the deeds that we have done do not disappear. The body dies, but the Mind and Ego, ME, carries its pending *Karma* and is reborn in a new body. This happens when the Power of the Soul departs at death but returns at that point of conception where the ME, the Mind and Ego is reborn in a new body, to start a new journey, to settle all old *Karma*.

Many people are confused about what this Power is. This Power which we call Soul or Spirit, *Atman* or *Ruh*, *Chi* or *Prana*, is the very life force that is the essence of our existence. Without this power, there could be no birth, no life, and no rebirth. Whatever *Karma* we do, is empowered by the Soul. The Soul does not own the *Karma*. It is just a Power that comes and goes. The Power in you and me, is the same Power. This can be easily understood when we compare it to the electricity in our house. We might have a white bulb and a yellow bulb, a television and a refrigerator. These are different gadgets, but the Power that makes them turn on is the same single source of Power. Unfortunately, we human beings do not understand this truth. We need to realize it. Somehow, we believe, as we were taught, that 'my Soul is different from your Soul'. This is the root cause of our ignorance. It causes us to believe that we are the body and mind. It makes us perform actions and create *Karma* and this *Karma* makes us return to the earth in a rebirth, again and again. Most of us are intelligent to understand that once the body dies and is returned to dust, where is the question of going to heaven or hell. This is a fairy tale that our scriptures tell. Whatever we do, good or bad, we experience the result of it in a heaven or a hell, right here on earth when we take rebirth. That is why a child is born blind. That is why somebody else is born in the lap of luxury. The Universal Law of *Karma* makes no mistake. It returns good for good and evil for evil and this cycle goes on and on. Nobody can escape from the cycle, except the one who realizes that we are not the body that does *Karma*, not the mind and ego that directs all action. We are the Divine Soul. A very rare minority is able to realize this truth. This small group of people is

liberated from *Karma*, just as these people are liberated from the cycle of death and rebirth. The rest of us, just live and die because we never ask the question, 'Who am I?' We just create *Karma*, and we experience life on earth as a human being. We never realize we are manifestations of the Divine. We are part of SIP, the Supreme Immortal Power, that most of us call 'God'. Because we do not realize this, we live and we die, and we do not experience that state of Eternal Happiness, Divine Love and Everlasting Peace. Those of us who realize, are free from this cycle. We are liberated from returning to earth and we are united with the Divine. This is our ultimate goal – to realize we are the Divine Soul.

But what has all this got to do with giving? Why should we Give before we are Gone? The connection is easy and simple. Those who don't give, but live, without realizing the truth of *Karma*, may seem to enjoy pleasures on earth. However, they cannot escape from *Karma*. The first category of people, ignore the Law of *Karma* completely. They live selfish lives, without caring, sharing and giving. For sure, they will suffer, because they do everything wrong to earn and to enjoy the pleasures of this world. Why? Because they did not learn about *Karma*. They did not understand the simple law that is based on cause and effect. Whatever you do, it has to come back to you. If we perform evil deeds, we have to pay for the evil we did. Such is the law! Those who understand the law and choose to be philanthropic, they give and give, knowing that giving is not a waste. Every act of charity, of help, of sharing, is a seed they plant. It will return as a fortune or good destiny in their present life journey on earth. Not just that, if

their acts of charity are not rewarded in this life, the Law of *Karma* will ensure that they will be rewarded in their next life. Those who wonder how this can be possible, must introspect on how a child is born in a palace. What was the reason? Why is another child born in a slum? This is not luck or chance. This is the Law of *Karma* unfolding.

Therefore, those who give as they live, are creating good *Karma*. They may give food to abandoned children, or they may give clothes to a blind school. It hardly matters to whom you give and what you give, as long as the attitude of giving is sincere. Those who understand the Law of *Karma* and give as they live are sure to be rewarded for their good deeds. So also, those who don't give, but just live and die, collecting wealth, soon lose their health and when they die, they have no investments in their *Karmic* account that will bear return in their new life. They are sure to suffer because they ignored the law of *Karma*. Therefore, understanding the law, and giving while living is a very important aspect of life.

Unfortunately, most of us don't realize that as long as we create *Karma*, good or bad, we have to return to earth. There is no escape. Those who return to earth, get caught in this world or *Samsara*. The mind and ego is reborn in a new body and cannot escape *Dukkha*. What is this triple suffering that every human being experiences on earth? It is suffering caused by the pain of the body, the suffering caused by the misery of the mind, and the suffering caused by the agony of the ego. All of us experience this triple suffering the moment we return to earth in a rebirth. Is that the reason, some people wonder, that a

little child that is born, screams and cries at birth, already aware that it has to face the triple suffering? Otherwise, it might have arrived, laughing and giggling out of the mother's womb.

What then must we do about *Karma*? First of all, we must become aware of the law. Did we not learn, 'ignorance of Law is no excuse'? Just because we did not know that such a law exists, we cannot escape it. Our first challenge is to earn good *Karma*, to be kind and generous, loving and caring. Every act of our life must be a good deed. This will become a good seed that will germinate and sprout into happiness. We must desist from bad deeds because they will become bad *Karma* that will sprout as our suffering. This is the first simple learning about *Karma*. We must learn to give. The more we give, the more good *Karma* we create. We must give as much as we can, to as many as we can, as often as we can. This is what I learned from my Guru, my Spiritual Mentor, Dada J.P. Vaswani. So, I give every day that I live, and I urge you to give too. If we understand *Karma* and do this much, at least, we will not suffer on the planet in this lifetime. Giving becomes an insurance premium we pay, the result of which will also come in our next life.

Before we close on *Karma*, we must understand that *Karma* has 3 accounts. One account is our corpus, something like a warehouse or fixed deposit. Every life that we end, the net balance of good and bad *Karma*, gets added to this continuous corpus of *Karma*. It is known as *Sanchita Karma*. Every time, we start a new life, we pick the opening balance of our *Karma* from this corpus. If the corpus has a lot of good *Karma*, we can have a

good life. If the corpus has only bad *Karma*, we cannot have a good life. The opening balance is known as *Prarabdha Karma*. Does it mean that if our opening balance is bad, full of negative *Karma*, we are doomed to live and die a miserable life? No! *Karma* gives us another opportunity. We have free will. Only human beings can choose as they are blessed with an intellect. We can create good *Karma* and bad *Karma*, through our choices that become actions or deeds. This *Agami Karma* can not only wipe out the *Prarabdha Karma* or the opening balance, but if we seek the truth, are blessed with the guidance of a Spiritual Master, and we yearn for the Divine, we may be enlightened and drop all our *Karma*, not just the opening balance, but even the corpus that we have been carrying forward, life after life. The moment we realize we are not the body that does *Karma*, not the ME, Mind and Ego that carries *Karma* life after life, we are the Divine Soul, in that moment, we are liberated from all our *Karma*, just as we are liberated from *Samsara*, the cycle of death and rebirth.

Such a realized Soul, known as a *Jivanmukta*, lives as a *Stithpragya*, with a steady intellect, till the destined moment when the body dies. Having realized that he is not the body, mind and ego, he is the Divine Soul, he is liberated from coming to earth and eternally united with the Divine. This is a state known as *Moksha* or *Nirvana* and it happens when we transcend all our *Karma*.

The first step to be liberated from *Samsara*, to attain a state of *Moksha*, or *Nirvana*, is to give. We must make giving a habit. First, we must create good *Karma*, and secure a life devoid of

suffering. But this is not enough. The next step is to attain that state of Self-Realization, where we realize we are not the body, the mind, the ego but we are the Divine Soul. This will liberate us from rebirth and unite us with the Divine.

The love, kindnesses, and value
we have given authentically to others
will be our remaining treasures at the end of life.

Steve Brunkhorst

11

SELF-REALIZATION

Who am I and why this human birth?
What is the purpose I came to earth?
Am I the body, the ego? Am I the mind?
Who am I, this truth I must find!

The journey of life is to discover who we truly are. If we live and we die, and we don't realize, 'Who am I?' then we will suffer and cry, look at the sky and ask, 'Why?' and then just die! Why did we come to earth? Why were we not a dog or a frog? Why were we not bound to the ground like a tree that was not free? Why have we been given eyes to see and an amazing body to be who we are meant to be? Why are we the only species who has a free will and still remains in ignorance and does not discover who we are and why we are here? We chase success because we were taught that success is happiness. We don't realize that the reverse is true – Happiness is Success. To be happy, we keep climbing the peak of achievement and we make money. Our need becomes our greed, and we want more and more, till finally, our coffin goes out of the door. Life is over! Have we realized what life is all about?

Not many people understand the meaning of Self-Realization, although the term is flippantly used. Realization is not knowledge. Many people may have knowledge about living and giving, but Realization is not just knowledge. It is experiencing the Consciousness of truth. It is only when our knowledge crystalizes that we can open our real eyes to realize the truth. What is this Self-Realization all about? It is realizing that we are not you and me. We are all one Power, one Energy. This earth is a stage. Everything is a show. We are actors who come and go. Therefore, whatever we get, we must give as we live.

The one who wants Self-Realization goes on a quest with unanswered questions. He wants the truth. He wants to overcome the myth and so, he is persistent. He takes with him

several questions and starts his quest.

When I went on a quest, I took 9 questions with me. I asked myself what the ultimate secret of happiness is. Is it just achievement, success and money? I questioned myself if I would be here forever, or I would die. Of course, death is certain, but people will say that I passed away. Where will I go after death? If they cremate my body and say that I passed away, then who is the one who I truly am, who passed away? Clearly, I am not the body. Who am I? If I think I am the mind and I try to find the mind, where is the mind, I cannot find. Then, I questioned if there was something like *Karma*. Did it really exist, and would I be reborn, reincarnated as per my *Karma*? Does God control all this? Who is God, where is God, and what is God? Has God created Souls that are invisible? Are there good Souls and bad Souls? What is Enlightenment, Salvation, *Nirvana*, *Moksha* that religions talk about? I had these and many more questions as I started my journey of Self-Realization, my quest to realize the truth.

To succeed in the quest, we have to follow the 3-step method - Ask, Investigate and Realize the truth. I did not blindly believe what I read and what I heard. Every religion has its own theology, every philosopher has their own philosophy. What is the ultimate truth and what is the myth? This was the challenge. I investigated every possibility and came to several Realizations. I realized that death is certain. The body has to die. Everybody alive must ultimately leave the planet. I also realized that I was not the body. If I were, my loved ones would not burn it. I further contemplated that I was not born on my birthday. The day I cut my cake was fake. I was

conceived 9 months before as a single cell known as the zygote. I realized that the mind is just a bundle of thoughts, just as the ego is an illusion. I was none of these.

I realized that I was the Divine Soul that people call, 'the Divine Spirit, the *Atman*, the *Ruh*, the *Prana*, the *Chi*', or just the 'life force', that arrives at conception and departs at death. I realized I was just a spark of energy and at death, the energy would merge with the energy that is everywhere. We are all energy that manifests as the body. Even science endorses that the 30 trillion cells of the human body are ultimately, nothing but energy.

I further realized that God was not God. God was not he or she. God is a Power in you and me. God is SIP, the Supreme Immortal Power. The names and forms we give God are a pack of lies. I realized many more things, that we human beings live and die in ignorance, that our ignorance makes us believe that we are the Mind and Ego, ME. When the body dies, the ME carries its *Karma* and is reborn and this goes on and on. If I wanted to be free from all misery on earth, and free from the cycle of rebirth, I had to transcend *Karma*.

I realized I needed the help of a Spiritual Master or a Guru, just as I needed the grace of the Divine. I continued my quest to get many more Realizations that finally led to the Enlightenment of the truth. Enlightenment is not a mystical thing. It is just switching on the light inside to realize we are not the body, mind and ego. We are the Divine Soul. If we are not enlightened, then, we will live, we will die and we will return to earth again and again in a new body, in a new life.

Those who are enlightened realize that nothing belongs to them. They Give before they are Gone because they don't want to be reborn.

One who realizes the truth understands that he has a choice. Either he can be liberated from the cycle of life and death, from returning to earth in a rebirth or he can just come back again and again. Once there is Self-Realization, the choice stares us in our face. We can continue the race, to be an ace, and get caught in the maze or we can give, as we live, realizing the truth of the show and the fact that we have to go. The choice is ours. As long as there is no Self-Realization, there is no choice. We are filled with ignorance. But once we realize the truth, then either we have the power to transcend the senses of the body, the cravings of the mind and ego and we give to one and all, or we remain slaves of the body and mind and let our greed continue to let us earn and earn, till one day we finally burn and then return.

The moment one achieves Self-Realization, giving becomes a part of his living. He realizes nothing is his. Even the body that thought it is me, has to be left behind at death. Where is the question of taking money, wealth, and possessions? Even the people whom we love so much, and the relationships that are dear to us, are all finished at the point of death. Therefore, the realized one gives and continues to give, realizing that nothing is his. Everything is like a loan, a trust that he gets on the planet, and he has to leave it behind. Instead of it being snatched away at the point of death, he chooses to give everything he has, as he lives.

What about those who don't Give before they are Gone? It only shows that they have not realized the truth. They are caught in ignorance, thinking that everything is theirs. They live with fear and insecurity. They live, they die, and they come back as per their *Karma*. If they don't give as they live and they don't do other good deeds, their Karmic score will be poor and not only will they suffer on earth, but they may return in a rebirth, which is not very pleasant. Therefore, not realizing the truth and not giving is not only detrimental to this life, but also bad for the journey that lies beyond death.

Self-Realization is just the beginning. It leads to a life of Everlasting Happiness, Divine Love and Eternal Peace. The self-realized one lives in Consciousness of the truth, knowing who he truly is and why he is here. Not only does he learn to give, but he also learns to forgive. He lives without being a slave to his desires. Not only does he transcend the senses of the body, but he also transcends the mind and ego, ME. However, this is not easy. It takes a lot of effort to reach the point of complete Realization. This is because, as long as we are alive, the senses of the body, the mind and ego, continue to attack us. However, if we realize the truth, and live as the Divine Soul, if we give as we live, realizing that everybody alive is a manifestation of SIP, the Supreme Immortal Power, we may be liberated from all suffering on earth and rebirth.

Therefore, we have a choice – to give or not to give, to do good *Karma*, or not to do good Karma. We have an intellect and willpower which is unique to human beings. A dog cannot choose, but a human being can. All good deeds become seeds in our Karmic account and finally sprout, with shoots and

fruits, corresponding to our deeds. Good *Karma* or action will create a good destiny, just as bad deeds will be seeds that sprout as thorns in our future. The choice is ours. Those who realize the truth naturally live their life doing good *Karma*, but they go beyond just doing good *Karma*. They perform actions as an instrument of the Divine. They realize that they are nothing but the Divine Soul. They also realize that they do nothing. They live united with the Divine in Yoga, or *Yuj*, Union. Ultimately, at the moment of death, they are liberated from returning to earth and from taking rebirth. They live as a *Karma Yogi*, not expecting any fruits for the actions that they do. All their actions become an offering to the Divine. This is the attribute of a Realized Soul. Knowing that they come with nothing, and they go with nothing, they don't get fooled by the body, mind and ego that tries to make them believe, 'These are mine'.

It is Self-Realization that leads to not only giving while living, but it helps us achieve the ultimate goal of life – of being liberated from this world and united with the Divine. Alas, those who don't, continue to live in ignorance and suffer. It is a choice!

Your own Self-Realization is the greatest service you can render the world.

Ramana Maharshi

12

WHO ARE YOU GIVING TO?

Do you only give to your wife and your son?
Or do you give what you have to everyone?
Giving is giving, to the Soul that is in all,
Giving is giving, before our final call!

Some people feel that there is no big deal in giving. They are giving every day. They are giving their customers service and products. They are giving their employees salaries and perks and they are providing everything for their family and their near and dear ones. Is this giving? This is not giving. This is just a transaction. You have no choice. You have to give your customers because they pay you for it. You have to remunerate your staff, for the services they provide. You are also obliged to provide for your family and your near and dear ones, just as you expect them to fulfil your expectations. This is called '*Quid pro quo*' – this for that. When we exchange this for that, it is not giving. True giving is giving without having any expectations.

Most people think that they give, but in reality, they only give to live. Otherwise, if they had a choice, they would not give. They like to store, to hoard, to collect as much as they can, without realizing that ultimately, nothing is theirs and will be theirs. The ones who really give do not give when they are compelled to, but rather constantly share what they have with others who are in need. They are the ones who are truly giving. This giving is not a transaction. It is an offering to the Divine who manifests in the poor, the discarded, the destitute and the downtrodden.

Some people give only to those whom they love. Is this giving? This is not giving because it is expecting love in return! Giving is truly giving when we expect nothing in return. Suppose you give away walking sticks in a blind school, you expect nothing. This is giving! Of course, some people give because they expect a good *Karma* in return. This

is permitted. Giving for the sake of doing good *Karma*, is the only expectation that is permitted in giving. There should be no other expectation. We must give selflessly, without any selfish motive. Giving cannot be a manipulation. Some people give just because they get tax benefits. Is this giving? By now we are clear what giving is all about.

Many decades ago, an Indian Saint – Vivekananda stated that 'service to humanity is prayer to God'. What did he mean? He meant that man in reality is not the body that he appears to be. Man is a manifestation of the Divine. When we serve man as a Divine manifestation, this is the best way to pray to God. Vivekananda realized that God is not somewhere far away in the stars. God is the very Soul in every living creature. Therefore, when we reach out with love and compassion, and we serve man or beast, we are actually serving our Lord. Thus, giving has great significance, because when we selflessly give to the poor and needy, we are actually offering our privileges and our gifts to God who manifests in the poor. Not only must we give to them, but we must also have an attitude of service that is a Divine offering.

Those who realize the truth that we are not this body that we appear to be but rather the Divine Soul, treat every Soul with love and respect. They serve the underprivileged realizing that this is a *Leela* of the Lord, a show and it is our responsibility to give to these people who are in need before we go. When we are indifferent and we do not serve those who are in need, it only reveals our ignorance.

The majority of the people in this world have just one motto – to make money! There are a few people who are blessed. They go beyond just making money. They make a difference. Of course, we have to make money because without making money, how can we make a difference? But just making money and then dying is such a waste. Whatever we get, we must give, and we must give, before we are gone. Otherwise, all that we possess will be left behind and wasted.

If we want to pray to God, we have an option. We can go to a temple or church and fold our hands. Some of us are convinced into contributing 10% of our earnings to our religious institutions. However, when I was faced with this opportunity, I decided to spend it with my own hands. Instead of just writing a cheque and doing what is known as 'cheque book charity', I not only used the money to serve others, but served them in an attitude of prayer, because service to humanity is prayer to God.

As long as we are ignorant, we will either not give at all, and leave our wealth to disintegrate after our health deteriorates or we will just give as a transaction, expecting something in return. In both cases, we have failed. To truly live, is to give. To give so much that it hurts and give as much as we can, only keeping what we need, is to truly give. But the moment we have realized the truth, then giving becomes a part of our life, a way of life. The realized one, gives as he lives, knowing that this is the way to move from *Karma* to *Moksha*.

The simplest acts of kindness are by far more powerful than a thousand heads bowing in prayer.

Mahatma Gandhi

13

FROM *KARMA* TO *MOKSHA*

Giving is not just a way of living.
Giving is, in fact, Enlightenment revealing.
For in Giving one evolves just over good Karma,
Becomes a KarmaYogi and attains Moksha.

Giving is not a simple act of sharing what we have. Giving is a very profound way of expressing both our *Dharma* and our understanding of *Karma*.

What is the connection between giving and *Dharma*? *Dharma* is a word which is not clearly defined because of the way it is interpreted and understood. To some, it is like a cosmic law that defines the way we should live in a society with righteousness. *Dharma* to others is a collection of religious and moral duties that govern our conduct and philosophy of life. From *Dharma*, one picks up the Universal Law of *Karma* and tries to live with good action. This choice is based both on *Dharma*, our moral responsibility to give, help and serve, just as it is connected to *Karma*, the Law that states that whatever we give, is what we will get. When it comes to *Dharma*, we are taught, right from the beginning, that the world is one family, and we must share our fortunes with others. We must be compassionate and kind to those who are less fortunate than us. This is *Dharma*. Even a poor man who has one pound of bread, should share some of it with a hungry person on the street as per *Dharma*. Therefore, giving is intrinsically a part of human *Dharma* or basic essential philosophy of life. No religion, no culture, no civilization exists which does not encourage the *Dharma* of giving. In fact, it is embedded in most scriptures of this world. Not everybody understands the logic that giving has a deeper meaning, but people give anyway because of the feel-good factor that comes with giving. There are some who give because of society. *'What would people say, if I don't give? I would be going against my Dharma, my basic moral obligation towards the suffering and downtrodden'*.

While giving is closely connected to *Dharma*, it is subconsciously rooted with *Karma*, the law. 'The more we give, the more we will get', is the inspiration that motivates the world towards charity and philanthropy. Haven't we heard of people saying that after we are rich and successful, it is time to give back to society? Why? Because it is in giving that we receive. Such is the Universal Law of *Karma*. People clearly understand the Law of the boomerang – what goes around, comes around. Goodness, kindness that leaves us is never wasted and only returns to us multi-fold. Those who live with the philosophy of *Karma*, try to do good *Karma* so that their destiny can be filled with good fortune and happiness.

Giving, however, has a far more profound meaning for the one who is seeking the true purpose of life. The person gives because of *Dharma*, and also because of *Karma*. But it is *Moksha*, that makes one give away everything before they are gone. When one realizes that they are not the body, mind and ego, but the Divine Soul, and it is so obvious that nothing belongs to us, then they do not collect and hoard possessions that do not belong to them. They give as they live because they realize, 'Who am I?' They understand that this body is going to die. Whatever they get, they give. They only retain what they need to survive. This is a mark of an enlightened person. The way a person gives as he lives shows how much he has realized life and its purpose. Not only does the person not do bad *Karma*, as he realizes the Divine in one and all, but he also gives away without having any expectations. Expectations create desires that bind us to *Karma* and make us

return to earth. This is not what a realized one seeks. The realized one has understood the purpose of life. It is to go beyond the basic moral duties of *Dharma*, it is not to get caught in *Artha* or wealth, not to be trapped in *Kama* or lust, but to ultimately obtain *Moksha* or liberation. These four, *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksha* are known as the *Purushartha*, the purpose of life in 4 stages. The ultimate destination is *Moksha* or liberation, not to return to earth in a rebirth.

The giver who gives with an attitude of *Karma*, is planting seeds through his deeds. He has to return to earth. However, the giver who gives, with the goal of *Moksha*, has no expectations. He not only gives, and forgives, but also forgets what he gives, so there is no thought of getting fruit of his actions. Such a person is a *KarmaYogi*, one who lives as an instrument of the Divine, one who is free from *Dharma*, *Artha* and *Kama* – duty, wealth and lust and who only aspires for *Moksha*, liberation from this world and unification with the Divine.

Therefore, it is in giving as a *Karma Yogi* that one attains the true purpose of life, known to the world as *Moksha* or *Nirvana*, Liberation or Salvation. It is not only freedom from ignorance and freedom from the triple suffering of the body, mind and ego, it is also Liberation from rebirth and not returning to earth.

Give, before you are gone, for this opens the door that takes you through *Karma*, to *Moksha*, the ultimate goal of Liberation from this world and unification with the Divine. Giving not

only gives peace and joy while we are alive but leads us to eternal happiness and everlasting peace through Realization and Liberation. After all, it is a simple truth that nothing belongs to us, not even our body. Due to ignorance, we don't give as we live. At first, we give because we want to do good *Karma* and we want a better destiny. But thereafter, we give as a *Karma Yogi*. We give because we realize that nothing is ours, that when we go, we can take nothing with us. Therefore, we give as a *Karma Yogi* and this realization leads us to the ultimate goal of *Moksha*.

You give but little when you give of your possessions.
It is when you give of yourself that you truly give.

Kahlil Gibran

14

THE MAN WHO DIES RICH IS A POOR MAN

Of what use is to collect so much money,
We will leave it all behind, isn't that funny?
The one who doesn't Give before he is Gone,
Will return in a new life, and in poverty, be born.

If we live through life and so to say, become rich, richer, and the richest, do we actually realize that we are not the richest? In fact, we are the poorest. For we have made a very bad investment by just adding to our wealth! In the end, when we lose our health and we are dead, we are not even worth a penny! If only we used our intelligence and invested our money in the right place, we would get a good ROI, Return On Investment, when we return in our next journey. Therefore, one must not die rich in money. One must die as a philanthropist, one with a big heart, who has given away everything. That man is truly the richest man in the world!

Imagine being born in poverty. You had a choice. You could choose to be born in a rich family, a palace by doing good *Karma*. The best *Karma* for a rich man is to share his money with those in need. Some people build schools, some orphanages. There are others who want to help animals and build shelters. There are still others who want to contribute to the ecology of the world. There are several social causes, which are focused not on making money, but on making a difference. This is clearly a good *Karma*. When we spend our money before our end, on any noble cause, any genuine charity, that is a great investment because it directly returns to us in our rebirth on earth.

Is rebirth a reality? Some people question why we should Give before we are Gone. We may need our wealth. What if we just give it away, and then we can't get it back! They don't realize the truth that death is not the end, it is only a bend. Every 'body' is certain to die. But the one who was alive leaves the body. That is why our near and dear ones destroy our

body. Would they dare do it when we were alive in the body? Therefore, there is no doubt that we leave the dead body. Then, where do we go? Those who overcome the myth, realize that heaven and hell can only be experienced on earth through a rebirth. They understand the Law of *Karma* and Give before they are Gone. Those who don't understand this simple analogy and through inference accept rebirth, question till they lose their breath. At death, they may be rich in money, but when it comes to good *Karma*, they will be bankrupt. Therefore, it is better to die, making the right investments through good *Karma*, than collecting wealth, which will just fade into insignificance after we lose our health and die.

Some people are caught in the chase of success. They always think that success is happiness, till that final day when they are told that they are going to die. All their success amounts to nothing then. It's a waste. Such people keep happiness for a future date. They plan to be happy in a tomorrow that never comes. If only they realize that success is not happiness, rather happiness is success, they would give whatever they could before they depart. In giving, there is a great joy. Those who experience it continue to give as they live.

Fools don't give. They refuse to accept the reality of life. They do not want to accept death, which is round the corner. They are indifferent towards the truth. They never experience the joy of giving and so, after living a self-centred and selfish life, they ultimately die. Then, they return and face the consequences of their previous actions. Even though they

were rich, they die poor, because they cannot take a penny with them.

Every rich man dies poor, isn't this true? Whatever wealth we have, cash in the bank, gold and diamonds, assets and valuables, everything that we have collected in our life, has to be ultimately left here. We have no choice. You may have the most expensive paintings in your house, the most exotic gems and jewellery, large chunks of property and stocks, shares, bonds. When you die, none of this is yours. Are you rich or poor? When will we realize that the one who dies rich, dies poor, but the one who gives before he is gone, dies a rich man?

The man who keeps only what he needs for himself, provides what is necessary for his family and then spends all his wealth in causes that make this a better world, that serve suffering humanity, truly dies a rich man. Although his wealth is spent on several charitable, humanitarian and philanthropic causes, the act of giving makes him richer than he actually is. Although he does not have loads of money in the bank, he has tons of good *Karma* invested in the life beyond. Such a man is a truly rich man!

What happens to people when they die? The rich and famous are soon forgotten. They may be remembered by the business world, but new tycoons take over the stage and soon they are forgotten. But the man who spends before his end, and who gives before he is gone, is remembered forever. When such a man does die, the world will cry. His work will not be washed away. It will be etched in stone, for it is in giving that one truly

understands the meaning of living.

Therefore, each of us has a choice. We are all going to die. But we can die as a rich man who is actually poor or as a man who has given away all and is truly rich. We can die after making poor investments on earth that will not go with us in our life beyond or we can give, knowing for sure that whatever we give, we will get on the other side, after death. The choice is ours.

The hand that gives is nobler than the hand that turns the beads of a rosary.

AFTERWORD

MY 'GIVING' JOURNEY

I had nothing, but whatever I got,
I started to give.
The more I gave, the more I got!
What a magical way to live!

No doubt the world saw me as a successful person because whatever I touched turned to gold. There was success and more success. But the world did not understand the secret of my success. To me, the secret was simple – it was based on the universal law of *Karma – As you sow, so shall you reap. What you give is what you will get.*

From my first success, whatever I made, I gave a lot of it away. Somehow, I did not have the habit of being selfish, hoarding and storing my wealth. I don't even know why I gave, because it started when I was a child. Today, I feel grateful that I was blessed to give, for I realize that it is in giving that we receive. One thing is sure, my success was fuelled by my giving. The deeds of charity and service undoubtedly became the seeds that created the roots of success, the shoots of prosperity and the fruits of wealth and happiness.

I gave to everybody I could, not just my family and friends. But to strangers as well. I would give my love to old people, who needed help to cross the street. I would share my meals, with those who worked in our household. When I started earning, I shared my income with the poor and the underprivileged who were sleeping on the streets. What I am sharing is not some theory. It is my personal experience that the more I gave, the more I received. In fact, I received much more than what I gave away.

My giving continued as my success hit the skies. I made millions, but I also gave away millions. It had become an automatic circle of my life. I experienced great joy in giving

'IF WE DON'T GIVE, WE DON'T LIVE.' AiR

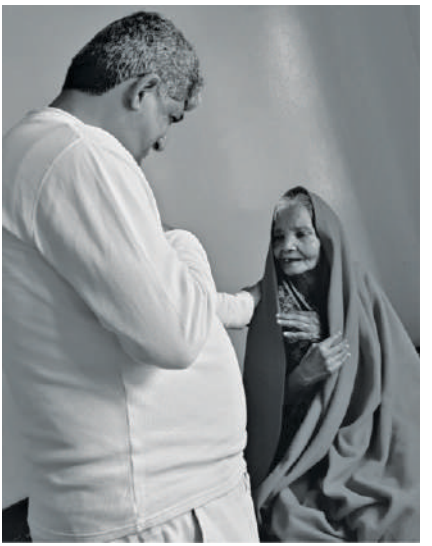
and this inspired me to give more and more.

From my initial business success, I set up a humanitarian trust. Our goal was to pick up people from the street and put them back on their feet. Some people had not eaten for days. They would have died. It was through Divine intervention that the team in our Trust, which was full of people with compassion and humanitarian hearts, was led to serve the destitute and the downtrodden. We found beggars on the street, and we set up small shops for them and provided them with merchandise to sell so that they did not have to beg for a living. When houses were ravaged by rains, we would reconstruct the roofs of the houses of the poor. We did anything and everything possible to serve the needy.

I was barely 30 when I started a weekly 'Giving day'. Every Monday, I would sit and wait for people to come to me with their problems and their needs. I would personally listen to their stories and try to find a way to help them. We helped thousands of people live with dignity and respect. We gave medicines to the poor, just as we funded their surgeries and treatment.

As we did this, we realized that the existing charitable homes had limitations. They had too many conditions for admission and did not admit all those who needed support. We found a child who was both mentally and physically challenged. Since we supported and sponsored several charitable institutions, we approached them for admission. One said that they could only take care of the physically challenged,

TO AiR, SERVICE TO HUMANITY IS PRAYER TO GOD.



while another institution stated that they could take care of only those who were mentally challenged. We were left helpless and hopeless.

We decided to set up our own humanitarian home. We bought a piece of land and constructed a 100-bed home. We had a few cases that could not find admission in any charitable institution. A poor maid servant had a child, and she approached a charitable mission. They refused to accept the child, until she promised never to see the child again. Sobbing and crying, she brought the child to us. Hundreds of such cases, of people who are turned away at charitable homes, still come to us. We admit them in one of our 3 charitable homes. We have about 700 people staying with us. We look after them, providing food, clothing, medicines and love and care. They are our family!

Where did the money come from? I don't even know. All I know, is that when we wanted the money, it was always there. There was never a time when we were short of funds. Even today, we spend millions to serve the poor, and while there are several supporters and donors who contribute to this mammoth but humble effort, it was 'giving', for sure, that led to us receiving the funds and the support we needed to make all this possible. While I gave a lot to the destitute, I also wanted to do something for God. At that time, I was deeply religious, and my faith in my God made me build a 65-foot statue of my Lord. Little did I realize that trying to give for my God's temple would become another source of getting resources to do bigger charitable projects.

'WHEN WE LOVE THE POOR, THE DESTITUTE, WE ARE LOVING GOD.' AiR

The 'Giving' journey has never stopped. I have evolved from a religious to a spiritual person, and my transformation has led to my metamorphosis. I continue to lead the charitable and other organizations that I have set up. But personally what I now give to others are my Realizations. I give away books, just as I give away a lot of innovative merchandise that can help people realize the truth about life. While I can't 'give' Enlightenment to others, I give talks and provide answers to questions that can help people on the ultimate journey of Self-Realization, Enlightenment, Liberation and Unification with the Divine. This is the mission of my life.

If I reflect upon my life, I am grateful for all the blessings I have received. I realize that in the beginning, it was *Karma*, the Law that was working. But I went beyond doing good Karma to becoming a *Karma Yogi*. I realized that every creature whether a human being or a beast, was nothing but a manifestation of the Divine. I experienced God as SIP, the Supreme Immortal Power in one and all and so, I served not the bodies that were suffering, but the temple that housed the Soul that was none other than the Supreme Immortal Power. This made me a *Karma Yogi*, one who is ever united with the Divine, through acts of good deeds or *Karma*.

Right from the beginning, I knew nothing is mine, that we come empty-handed and we leave empty-handed. I was blessed to live with detachment and even today, I try to give away as much as I can. I even realize that I don't give, these hands are not mine. I am just an instrument of the Divine. It is the Divine will that causes the 'giving' through my hands. It

AiR WITH HIS FAMILY OF 700. SHIVA WAS BROUGHT TO AiR HUMANITARIAN HOMES 25 YEARS AGO.

may appear that I give, but in reality, all 'giving' is that of the Divine. If only we realize this, and we live and give, we can not only enjoy the blessings of the Supreme that will liberate us from the triple suffering on earth but ultimately, we will be united with the Divine as we are liberated from rebirth.

We may pray to a God, but we do not realize that God is not God. God is SIP, the Supreme Immortal Power, in you and me. We are ignorant about this truth and thus refrain from giving while living. If only we realize that we are nothing, and we realize that we are all part of that one Supreme Immortal Power SIP, we would give everything away. Somehow, the body, mind and ego, keeps us trapped in ignorance and we do not realize that we come with nothing, and we will go with nothing. The ego makes us believe that I am 'I' and this is mine. I was lucky to realize that nothing is mine. Everything is thine! Even I am thine! With this Divine revelation, my life has evolved to where it is today. I hope that I continue to give as I live and when that day comes when it is time to go and I hear the death whistle blow, I should have given away everything that I have. My aspiration is to Give before I am Gone, so that I become one with the Divine and I am not reborn.

When it is time to go, and I hear the death whistle blow,
May I have given away all that seemed to be mine,
This is my prayer, O Divine!

Give, before you are gone, for you are sure going to go.
This world is nothing more than a drama, a show.
Give, for you don't know when the death whistle will blow!

Nothing is ours, did we bring anything with us?
We will leave everything behind, then why all the fuss?
Isn't it better that we give away our surplus?

This world is not real, it is a Cosmic Illusion.
Man is a fool, he gets caught in his possession,
The ultimate goal of man is to get Liberation.

There is great joy in giving, have you ever tried to give?
If you haven't ever given, you haven't started to live!
Nothing is more important than to give as you live.

We spend our entire life, first to learn and then to earn,
Whatever we earn, one day, others will burn!
This is a simple truth, but this, when will we learn?

Nothing is ours, it is just a Trust, just like a loan.
We have to leave everything behind, even our mobile phone!
People who don't understand this, don't smile, they groan.

It is certain that every 'body' must die, none can escape death,
You may have wealth, but soon you will lose your breath!
Therefore give, before you are gone, the wise men have said.

Life is made up of a few years, don't try to add years to life,
Add life to your years and give to those who are in strife,
Don't just keep your money, for your family after your life!

Those who are ignorant, think everything is ours,
They have a lot of money, but are caught behind these bars,
They don't realize the truth, they are zapped by the stars.

They do not give what they have, because they live with fear,
'What will happen if I give away everything, my dear!'
They sing this song, until they die, year after year.

They don't realize it's all Maya, a cosmic projection,
They don't realize it's a Leela, a show in higher dimension,
They spend their life, doing nothing, except in wealth collection.

They did not spend time understanding their duty or Dharma,
They did not realize the truth of the Law of Karma,
Nobody told them that their goal was Moksha.

The Law of Karma is simple, what you give is what you get,
Karma makes no mistake, you can be sure, this is a bet!
If you don't get it now, it will come after you are dead!

For all this, you need, what is called, Self-Realization,
Overcoming ignorance, and getting Liberation.
When we give, we will get the Divine revelation.

For God is not someone who lives up in the stars,
Not in a temple or church, not even in Mars!
God is in every living being, in birds, animals and flowers.

We don't realize that when we give, we actually give to God.
Every human being is a manifestation of the Lord.
We just follow the herd and are caught by the fraud.

Whatever we earn is going to be a complete waste!
This truth is bitter, but we must ensure that this we taste.
If we don't give, we will be gone and everything will be erased.

A man who dies rich, in reality dies very poor,
For if he did not give anything, he will suffer for sure.
All his life, all he did, was to want more and more!

Isn't it the truth, empty-handed we come, and we go?
We must learn that we must give before the end of the show,
What we give, will come back to us, this we must know.

But what we don't give, we leave behind, others will snatch,
We have no option but to give, did you get the catch?
If not when alive, after we die, everything will despatch.

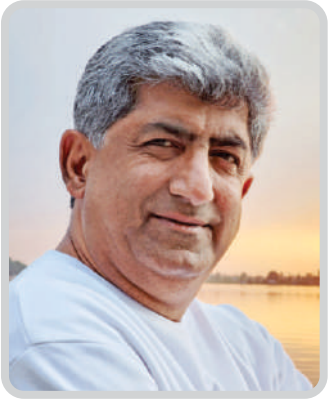
So, learn this simple lesson and Give before you are Gone,
If you don't learn this, you are sure to be reborn,
You will suffer again and again, and this will go on and on.

By
AiR
Atman in Ravi

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

AiR- *Atman* in Ravi

Started with nothing,
Became something…
Achieved everything,
Only to realize we are nothing!



AiR – *Atman* in Ravi, is an Embodied Soul whose only mission in life is to 'Help People Realize the Truth about Life and be Enlightened.' He was born in Bangalore on October 15, 1966. At a very young age, Ravi V. Melwani mastered the craft of business and became a very successful businessman who revolutionized retailing in India with the stores KidsKemp, Big KidsKemp, and Kemp Fort. After making millions, he realized that life is not just about making money. He shut down his business at the age of 40 and started making a difference doing H.I.S. work – Humanitarian, Inspirational and Spiritual work.

As a part of the Humanitarian initiative, 3 charitable homes

were set up to provide free medical treatment and care to the poor, destitute, and needy. Today, over 600 suffering homeless people who are picked up from the streets are served and cared for in 3 destitute homes and provided with free shelter, food, clothing, and medical care. AiR built a Shiva Temple in the year 1995 in Bangalore, which is now known as the Shivoham Shiva Temple. AiR now believes that religion is just a kindergarten of Spirituality, and people should go beyond religion to truly realize God.

One day, his Guru inspired him to introspect and find answers to the following questions: Who am I? What is the purpose of my life? Is life just meant to seek pleasures and to live and die without any purpose? What happens after death? Will I be reborn? Who is God? Where is God? What is God? What is the Soul? Where are heaven and hell? What is Enlightenment? Several questions like these took him on a quest, a search for the Truth. He gave up his life of Achievement and Fulfilment in search of the final peak of life: Enlightenment.

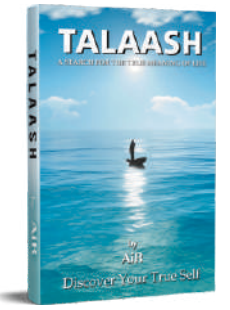
After a few years of intense search in retreat, deep in the mountains, he realized that we are not this body. We are the Soul, the *Atman*. He changed his name to AiR – *Atman* in Ravi. He metamorphosed to AiR and gave up his entire life as Ravi V. Melwani and started living as an instrument of God doing His Divine Will. This led to several Realizations that formed his new mission of life – to 'Help People Realize the Truth about Life and be Enlightened.'

Since then, AiR's life has been dedicated to reaching out and helping people to eradicate the ignorance that they live in. Based on his realizations, AiR has published over 48 books, composed and sung about 1250 bhajans, written several blogs, quotes, and poems. He has taken up various other initiatives that can lead people towards the Truth like conducting AiR Spiritual Retreats and giving talks that help people evolve on their spiritual journey. He is a TEDx speaker and is also invited to speak at several organizations like YPO (Young Presidents' Organization), Rotary Club, Lions Club, and at many corporates, schools, and colleges. He conducts webinars every week on Zoom, ASK AiR sessions every day and Facebook Live to help people realize the ultimate purpose of their life.

If you have any questions on happiness, suffering,
life, death, rebirth, karma, liberation, enlightenment
or anything related to spirituality,
you can ask your questions directly every day on Zoom at 8 p.m.

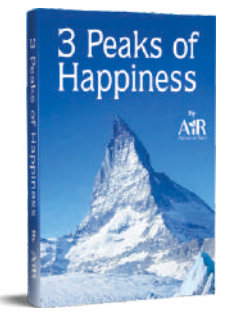
Zoom Meeting ID: 85021104431

BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR



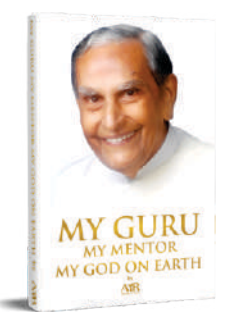
1. Talaash

Talaash means 'search' or a 'quest'. This book by AiR recounts his own spiritual quest for the Ultimate Truth that led him to the Realization that we are neither the body nor the mind, but the Divine Soul.



2. 3 Peaks of Happiness

This book talks about the universal quest of humanity—Happiness. It explains the ways through which people can reach the third peak of Happiness—Enlightenment which lies beyond the two peaks of Happiness—Achievement and Fulfilment. The third peak liberates us from the prisons of misery and sorrow and gives us eternal joy and bliss.



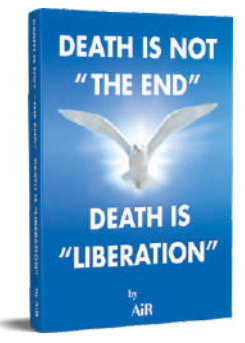
3. My Guru, My Mentor, My God on Earth

This book is AiR's tribute to his Guru, Dada J.P. Vaswani. AiR shares his experiences with Dada and how Dada's philosophy and teachings were instrumental in guiding him to begin his spiritual quest and bringing about the transformation in him.

4. I will Never Die, Death is Not "The End"

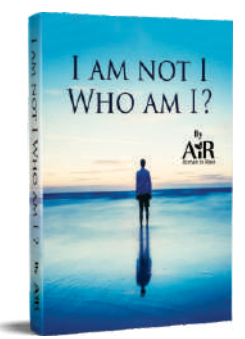
In the journey of his life, AiR Realized many truths. One of the truths is a revelation—we never die; Death is not the end but a bend to transcend. The body will die, but the one who lives in the body never dies. This book explains this truth in detail.

5. Death is Not "The End." Death is "Liberation"



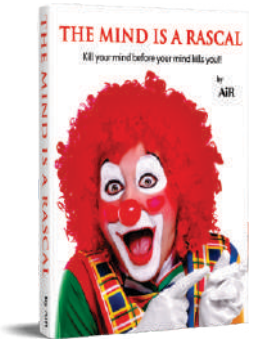
The second book by AiR in the series of books on 'Death' touches upon the secret of Kathopanishad which talks about what happens after death. One of the two things can happen: if we think we are the body and mind as a doer, we are reborn, but if we realize that we are the Soul and not the body and mind, we are liberated to eternal joy and peace.

6. I Am Not I. Who Am I?



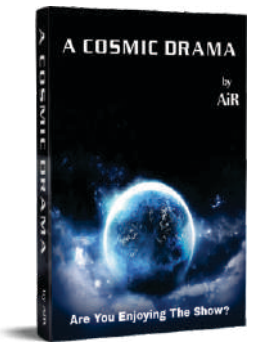
This is an insightful book by AiR which talks of his quest and Realization that we are not who we think we are. We have a car but we are not the car. Similarly, we have a body but we are not the body. Then, who are we?

7. The Mind is a Rascal



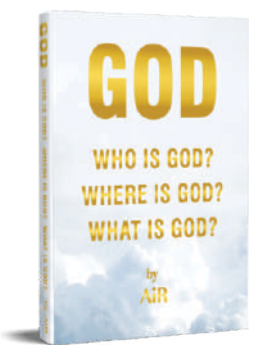
You always thought that the mind is king—it is everything. But it's a rascal! Try this. Sit quietly for an hour, and try to find the mind. Where is it? You will realize that the mind doesn't exist. This book by AiR will show us how the mind makes us suffer. It is time to find the rascal and kill it before it kills us.

8. A Cosmic Drama



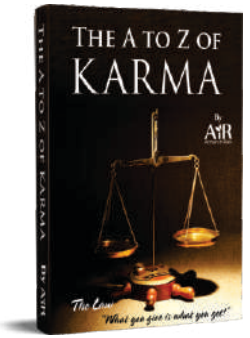
This book challenges the reader to explore the illusory nature of this world—whatever is happening in life is not real; it is nothing but a Cosmic Drama. If we understand this simple truth, we can enjoy the show called life.

9. Who is God? Where is God? What is God?



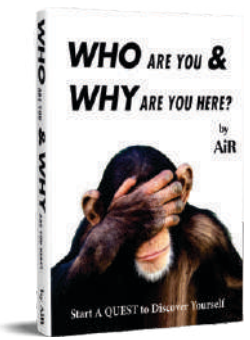
These questions might seem simple enough but nobody really knows the answers. We all know that God exists. We pray to a God as per our Religion but what is the Truth about God? Has anybody seen God? Where is God? This book will change your perception and belief about God and help you Realize God.

10. The A to Z Karma



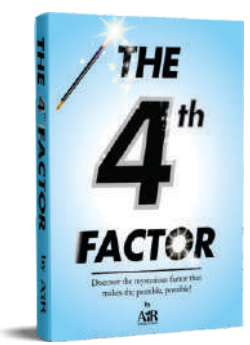
Most people are aware of the concept of Karma – the Universal Law that states, 'What you give is what you get.' But not everybody knows the A to Z of Karma that we can actually transcend Karma, escape from all misery and sorrow, and ultimately attain Liberation or *Moksha*. This book reveals the secret of eternal joy and peace—a life without any misery or suffering.

11. Who Are You and Why Are You Here?



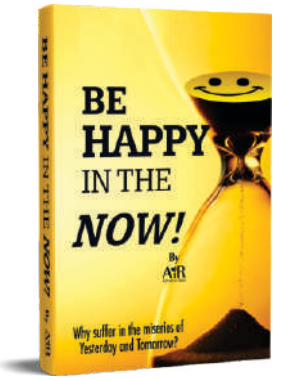
This is a simple book that prompts us to ask the right questions to discover the secret of our life—who we are in reality and what the purpose of our life is. The answers to these questions hold the key to a meaningful and blissful life.

12. The 4th Factor



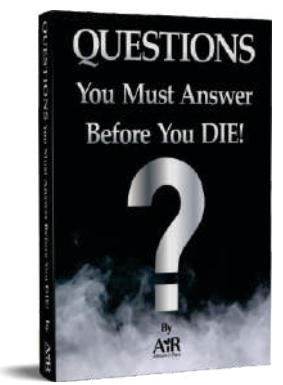
Man gets upset when his efforts don't bear fruit. This is because man is ignorant about the 4th Factor that is beyond human comprehension. Without its consent, even the possible becomes impossible. This is an informative book that makes the readers understand why things happen the way they happen!

13. Be Happy in the NOW!



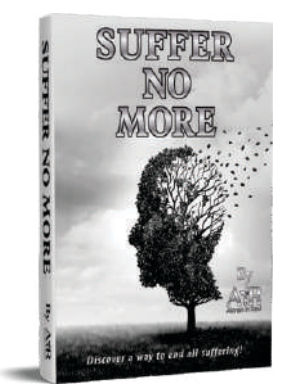
Every human being on earth wants to be happy. There is nobody who enjoys pain. But what is the secret of eternal joy, bliss and peace? It is being happy in the NOW. With this book, AiR hopes to inspire people to live life moment by moment if they really want to be happy.

14. Questions You Must Answer before you Die!



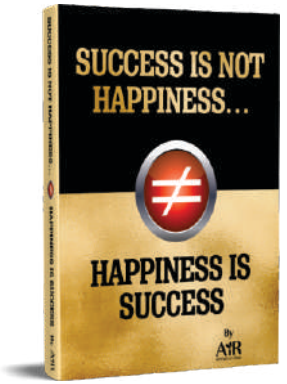
Most of us live and die but we don't ask the question—Why? We just exist! This book presents a series of important questions with answers that can guide us to the Realization of the Truth and help us live with meaning, purpose, and joy.

15. Suffer No More



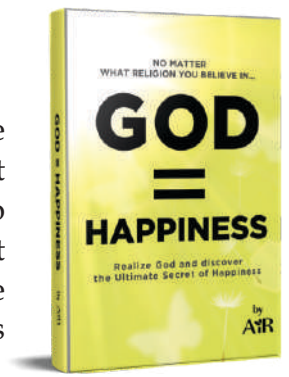
'Suffer No More' is a personal experience of overcoming anguish, anxiety, distress, and grief. It is an analysis of suffering, what causes it and how we can overcome it. While there is pain, we can do away with suffering. This book will tell us how.

16. Success is not Happiness, Happiness is Success



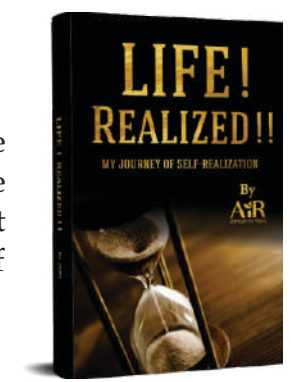
People want to win because this makes them happy, just as failure makes them miserable. This book explains how success does not bring happiness and how this belief is only an illusion. In fact, instead of chasing success, we should try to be happy! That is true success.

17. God = Happiness



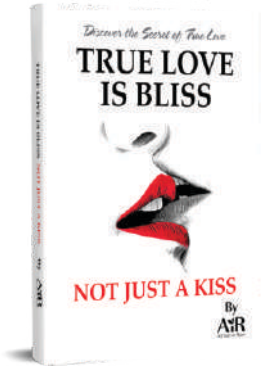
In his quest to discover Truth and the purpose of life, the author realized that people didn't know where exactly to search for happiness. This is a book that takes us far beyond religion to Realize the Truth about God and how God is Happiness.

18. Life! Realized!!



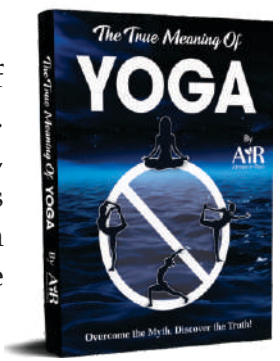
This book is a personal reflection of the author on his several realizations while on his quest for the Truth about everything that matters in the journey of life.

19. True Love is Bliss...Not Just a Kiss



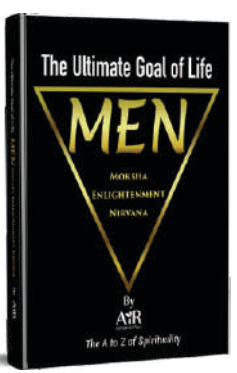
Love, which is a source of joy and happiness, is not really understood by the world. This book is an attempt to explore True Love. True Love is White Divine Love from the Soul that manifests as the 7 colours of human love from the day we are born till the day we die.

20. True Meaning of Yoga



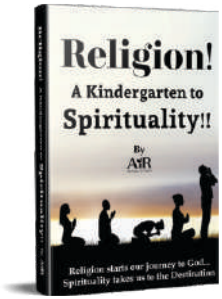
Yoga, today, is primarily taught as a set of body postures and breathing exercises. But this is not true Yoga! Yoga, in reality, is a constant union with the Divine. This book attempts to explain how through Yoga one can be liberated from the cycle of death and rebirth.

21. The Ultimate Goal of Life, MEN — Moksha, Enlightenment, Nirvana



The three most tenable concepts — Moksha, Enlightenment, Nirvana are discussed in this book that can help us reach our Ultimate Goal of Liberation and then Unification with the Divine.

22. Religion! A Kindergarten to Spirituality!!

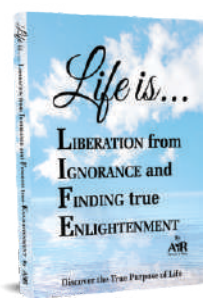


This book discusses how Religion is only the first step towards God-realization. We do not realize that Religion is only a Kindergarten, of which Spirituality is the University, and together they can lead us to God-realization.

23. Why Bad Things Can't Happen to Good People!

This book helps us understand that this world has been created by the Divine and it operates through certain Universal Laws that need no intervention by the Creator. Bad things can never happen to good people, just as apples can't grow on mango trees!

24. LIFE is...Liberation from Ignorance and Finding true Enlightenment

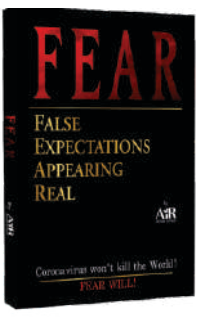


Most people just exist but they don't truly live. They just zoom from womb to tomb, and then life is over. They don't stop to think about their life's true purpose. In the pursuit of happiness, success and achievement, people don't realize that they lose their most precious gift—life itself. This book reveals what life is all about.

25. The Ladder to Heaven

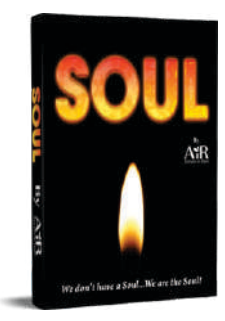
Most people believe in God and aspire to go to their God in heaven one day. It doesn't matter what our religion is, there is a way to reach God. There is a Ladder that can take us to heaven but we need to ascend the rungs of the Ladder to Heaven. This book shows a step-by-step way to God-realization.

26. FEAR- False Expectations Appearing Real



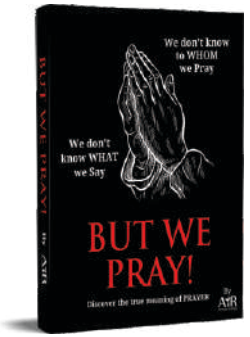
The world has changed today because of Coronavirus. But it's up to us to live with FEAR or FAITH. There is a difference between Fear and Danger but most of humanity lives with the constant fear of disease and death. Through this book, the author inspires people to live with courage and not panic.

27. Soul – We don't have a Soul... we are the Soul!



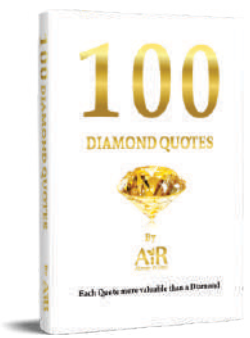
The Soul is mysterious. We are alive because of our Soul. But what exactly is the Soul? We cannot see the Soul, but we all believe that we have one. This book will help genuine seekers of the truth to do some Soul searching and realize - we don't have a Soul...we are the Soul!

28. But We Pray!



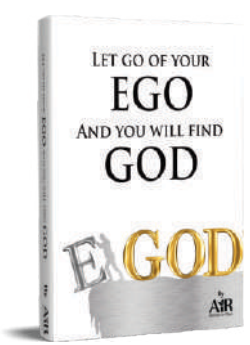
The whole world prays to God. Every religion claims that their God is the real God and their prayer is the most effective form of prayer. Unfortunately, we don't even know the God we pray to nor do we understand what we say in prayer. This book will help us build a Divine connection through prayer.

29. 100 Diamond Quotes



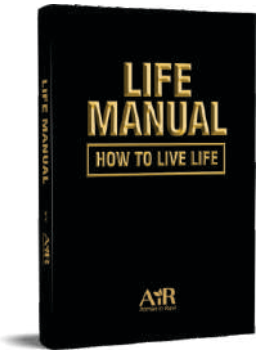
Our life needs a spark and a simple quote can make this difference. This book is a selection of AiR's inspiring quotes on happiness, liberation, realization, spirituality, and enlightenment that can trigger a metamorphosis in us in the quest for the true meaning of life, giving us more happiness than all the diamonds of this world.

30. Let go of your Ego and you will find God



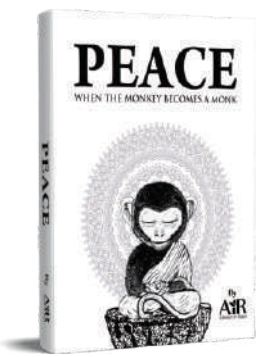
Are you seeking God? All you have to do is to let go of your Ego. Our biggest enemy, ME - Mind and the Ego, envelops us in ignorance and we go round in circles without discovering God within. This book will transform your life. It will show you the way to God just as it will guide you on how to let go of your Ego.

31. Life Manual - How to live life?



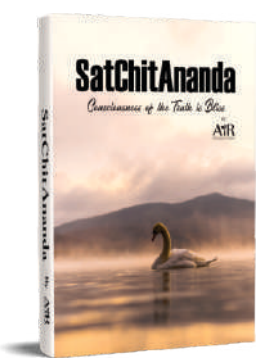
Whenever we get a new gadget, we read the operating manual before we start using it. But there is no such manual on life. This book is what we all need. It tells us what life is and how we should make the most of it.

32. PEACE... When the Monkey becomes a Monk!



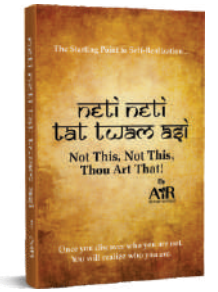
We all seek peace of mind but we don't realize that it is our own mind that steals our peace by constantly jumping from thought to thought. Unless we tame the monkey mind and make it a monk, we will never be able to experience true bliss. This book will show us the way.

33. SatChitAnanda - Consciousness of the Truth is Bliss



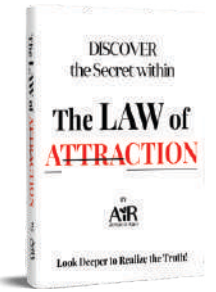
Very few people go in search of the true meaning of life. If they become conscious of the truth, they experience *Ananda*, a bliss unknown to the common man. This book reveals the secret of *SatChitAnanda* and shows us the way to live every moment of life with seamless joy and peace.

34. Neti Neti, Tat Twam Asi - Not This, Not This, Thou Art That



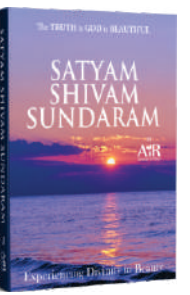
What is the way for a common man to be enlightened? This book reveals the key to opening the door to Enlightenment. It is *Neti Neti, Tat Twam Asi*, Not This, Not This, Thou Art That. To Realize the Truth of 'Who am I?' the first thing we must discover is 'Who I am not'.

35. Discover the SECRET within The LAW of AttraCTION



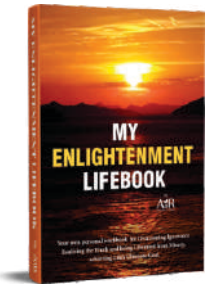
Many of us believe in the Law of Attraction, that we can realize our dreams through this mystical, magical law. But not all people are able to realize their dreams. This book reveals the 'real secret' within the Law of Attraction that actually works. It is the Law of Action.

36. Satyam Shivam Sundaram - Experiencing Divinity in Beauty



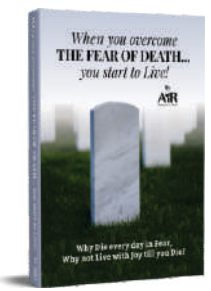
This book, based on the ancient chant Satyam Shivam Sundaram - the Truth is God is Beautiful, will help us realize a profound truth, that Beauty is Divinity. It will change the way we pray and build a closer connection with God, as we realize the Divine in the temple of our heart.

37. My Enlightenment Lifebook



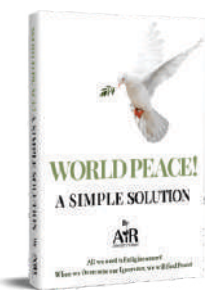
This book is a treasure of crystalized wisdom that is put together in a simple manner to help one Realize the Truth. It is a weapon to cut through the myth and to Realize the Truth about the Divine. It is not a textbook of knowledge. It is a workbook of Enlightenment.

38. When you overcome the FEAR of DEATH, You start to LIVE



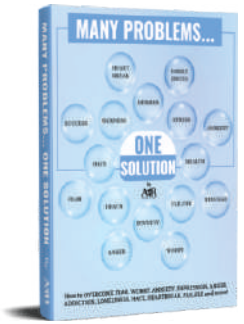
The fear of death stops us from living life. While we are all 'alive', we are paralyzed by fear. FEAR is only a False Expectation Appearing Real, but when we fear death, we are unable to do many things. We become paranoid and phobic. Unless we overcome the fear of death, how can we truly live?

39. World Peace! A Simple Solution



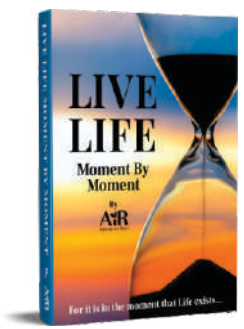
The world is in pieces. It is fragmented by differences, endless disputes and wars. We all want Peace, yet Peace eludes us. There is a simple solution to World Peace! If only we Realize the Truth of who we truly are and why we are here, all this bloodshed will end and this world will become a Peaceful Heaven on earth.

40. Many Problems, One Solution



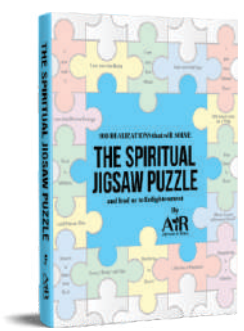
Everybody has problems. Some people have money related problems, some face challenges due to health. There are people who live with fear, worry, jealousy, stress, anxiety, depression, even with the thought of suicide. The list is endless! Is there a way out of this suffering? This book has the secret!

41. LIVE LIFE... Moment by Moment



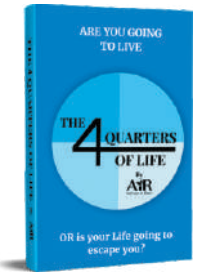
Neither is life a journey from birth to death, nor is it the number of years we live on earth. Life is about 'now', this moment. If we lose this moment, we lose life. Unfortunately, most of us don't live, we just exist! This book will inspire you to Live life in the now, moment by moment!

42. The Spiritual Jigsaw Puzzle



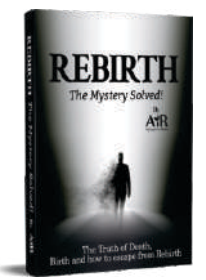
Are you seeking eternal happiness or searching for the ultimate purpose of life? Then this is the perfect book for you. The 100 Realizations in this book are the 100 pieces of the Spiritual Jigsaw Puzzle, that, once put together, will lead you to be enlightened with the Truth, and liberate you from all suffering to experience a spiritual ecstasy unknown to common man.

43. The 4 Quarters of Life



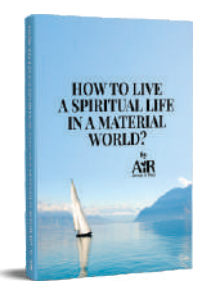
Read this book to discover the purpose of life. We must divide our life into 4 Quarters. The First Quarter is about Learning, while the Second is about Earning. The Third and the Fourth Quarter are meant for us to attain the ultimate goal of life, Enlightenment, which few people do.

44. REBIRTH ... The Mystery Solved!



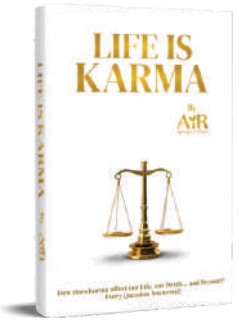
Do you believe in Rebirth or does the mystery of Rebirth baffle you? We know that death is certain but is there something beyond death? While we witness births and deaths, we wonder whether Rebirth is a reality or not. This book will help you decode the mystery of Rebirth, just as it will reveal the secret of escaping from the cycle of Death and Rebirth.

45. How to Live a Spiritual Life in a Material World?



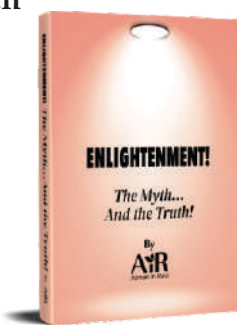
Most of us are lost in the material world and only turn to Spirituality when suffering comes our way. We don't realize that a Spiritual life can liberate us from all misery and suffering. Is it even possible to live a Spiritual life in this material world? Of course, it is! Discover the secret revealed in this book.

46. Life is Karma



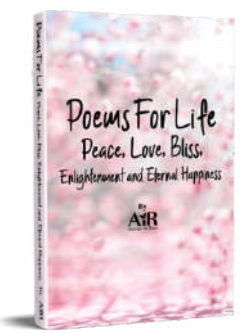
Every time something happens in life, we say, 'Karma!' Yet, we still don't understand how Karma really works. This book has all the questions along with the answers and how you can transcend Karma and be free from the Karmic cycle of death and rebirth.

47. Enlightenment - The Myth and The Truth



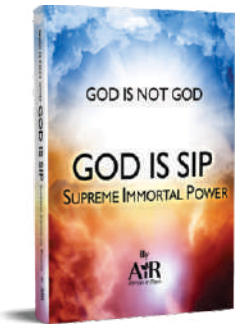
We have been gifted with a human birth so that we can attain Enlightenment. For this we have to unlearn many lies that we have gown up with. This book will help you be enlightened as it discriminates the Truth from the Myth.

48. Poems for Life - Peace, Love, Bliss, Enlightenment and Eternal Happiness



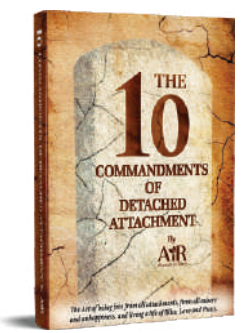
Never have you read a book of Poems like this,
Poems that will give you Peace, Love and Happiness.
Poems that will tell you the Truth about Life,
How to Overcome Misery and how to Overcome Strife!
So, if you ever want to read a book, choose this,
These Poems have Meaning, and they are full of Bliss.

49. God is not God. God is SIP – Supreme Immortal Power



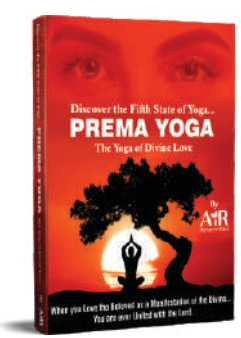
God is not God! When you read these words, you will be shocked but this is the Truth. When we say God, we think of the God we pray to every day. When you go in search of God, you realize that God is Supreme, Immortal, without birth and death. There is no God beyond God. That's why we don't call God, God. We say, God is SIP, the Supreme Immortal Power.

50. The 10 Commandments of Detached Attachment



What are the 10 Commandments which can liberate us from all attachments? It is common for us human beings to get attached to our possessions, to relationships, to the people we love and we become miserable. This is because of ignorance. If only we learn to live with detachment, we will be free. Follow these 10 Commandments and live a life of bliss and peace.

51. The Yoga of Divine Love - Prema Yoga



The world is familiar with Yoga or '*Yuj*', which means union with God. We know of the 4 states of Yoga: *Dhyana* Yoga, *Bhakti* Yoga, *Karma* Yoga and *Gyana* Yoga. *Prema*

Yoga, the Yoga of Divine Love is the Fifth state of Yoga unknown to the world. It is a special gift from the Divine to me. It is the most powerful state of Yoga, of being ever united with God through Love. When we go beyond loving the physical appearance of the Beloved, and love the Soul, the Spirit, the *Atman*, the *Ruh* within the Beloved, then we are actually loving God. By loving the Beloved as God, we love God all the time. Not only do we experience God in the Beloved, but our Love also flows to one and all, who are all manifestations of God. This book shares the experience of *Prema* Yoga, the realization of Divine Love that is for the Supreme that appears in the Beloved. This book can transform the way you live, the way you love, and the way you pray. It can transform Love into Prayer and Life into Love.

AND NOW

52. Give before you are Gone!

COMING SOON

53. Happiness is Success

54. Mukti... Freedom

GIVE

BEFORE YOU ARE GONE

'Why should I Give before I Go?' This is what most people ask. They earn and earn, only for others to burn what they earn. One day, when it is time to go, at the moment of death, everything will be snatched away. So, why not give as we live!

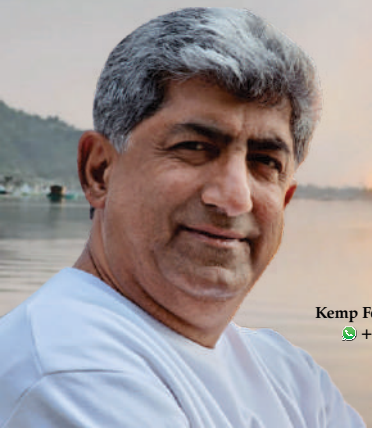
When will we realize that nothing belongs to us? We come with nothing, and we will go with nothing. So, why not spend before our end? Why not give as we live, so that when we die, the world will cry.

Unfortunately, most people live insecure lives. They have no faith, no courage to give. Ultimately, one day, they depart. They don't realize that they will lose everything, because they did not choose to give it away. The rare few who believe in Karma, Give before they are Gone, knowing that they will be rewarded when they are reborn.

GIVE! GIVE! GIVE!

Because if you don't, everything will be snatched away at death.

May this book inspire you to Give before you are Gone!



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ISBN 978-93-5627-681-9